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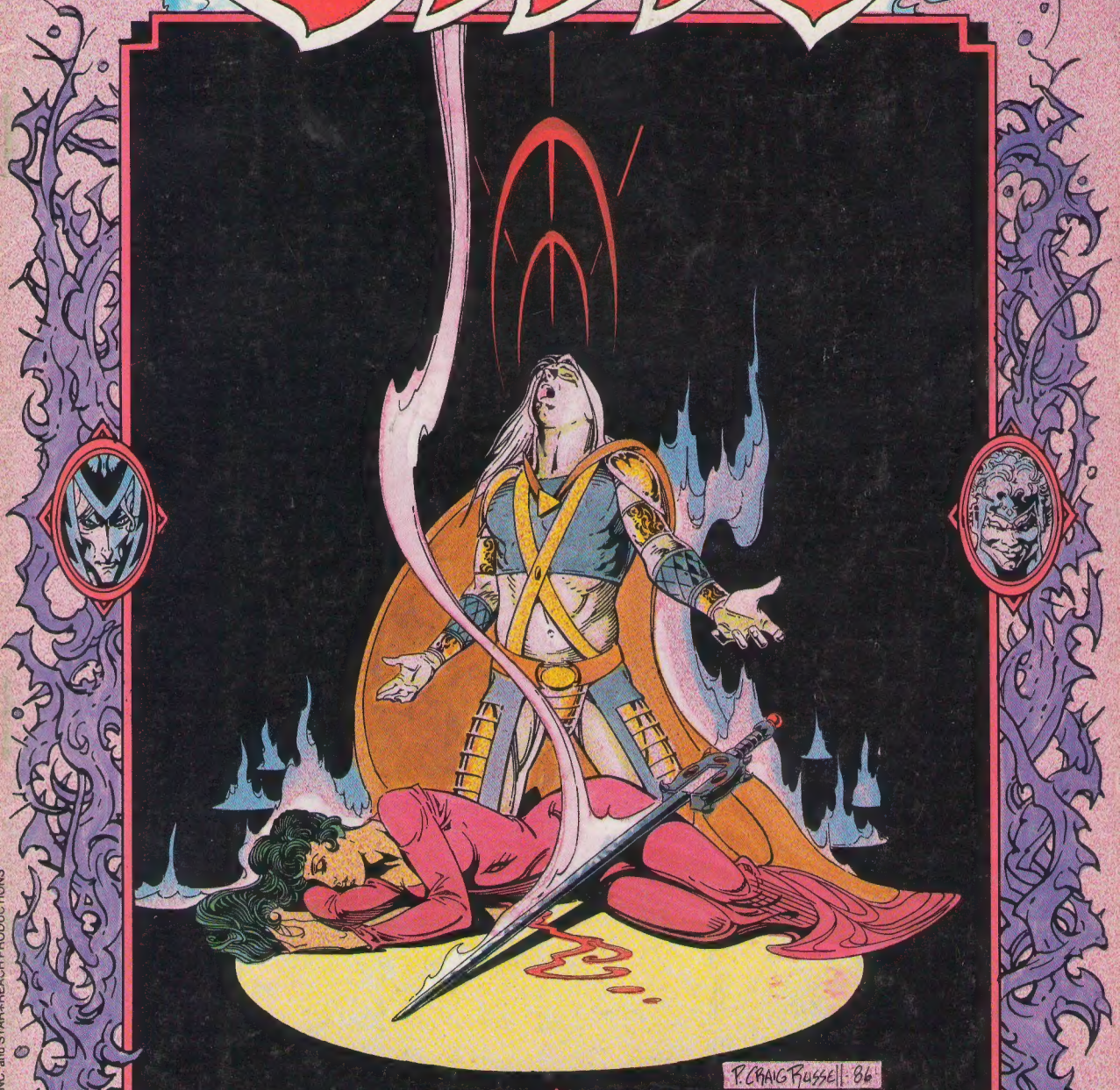
MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S

Elric

Weird of the White Wolf™



ROY THOMAS · MICHAEL T. GILBERT
P. CRAIG RUSSELL · GEORGE FREEMAN

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435 N. LASALLE, CHICAGO, IL 60610

Welcome to **Elric: Weird of the White Wolf** #2.

Once again, twisted timelines intervene and as I tap this column out **Weird of the White Wolf** #1 will be arriving at your local comics shop in a few days. Which means — no letters! Yet.

As editor on **Elric**, I could use this opportunity to ramble on, giving you my rundown of the state of the state, the country, the world the universe and comics in particular. As a matter of fact, I seem to have done that very thing several times before. And while the response was generally positive (hey! no moaning in back!), I'm not very lathered up about anything at the moment and see no reason why you should be subjected to my ravings and spleen-venting. Anyway, that's what friends, family and co-workers are for (have no fear, I get as well as give). And I'll have ample opportunity with other books in the future, subject only to your tolerance, my sensibilities and our Editorial Director **Rick Oliver**'s red pen.

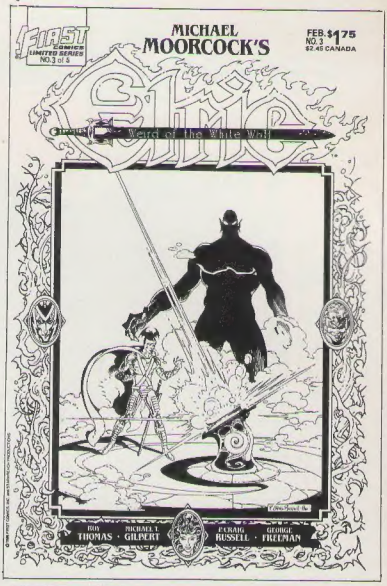
So, what's on the horizon?

Well, coming in September are two things you very well may want to know about. We begin the adaptation of the second of the **Hawkmoon:** *History of the Runestaff* series — **The Mad God's Amulet.** With **Gerry Conway**'s scripting, **Rafael Kayanan's** pencils, **Rico Rival**'s inks, **Carrie Spiegle's** letters and **Top Luth**'s colors. Same great team, same great book, new story, as Dorian Hawkmoon von Koln finds that the Dark Empire's reach extends farther than he had dreamed — and finds some very strange allies in his battles.

And out the same month, and even the same week is what so many of you have been clamoring for: **The Chronicles of Corum**! If anyone can judge which of **Michael Moorcock**'s Eternal Champions is most loved by readers, the mail we've received in the past two years makes it clear that Corum is certainly a main contender. And the team for **Corum** is — drumroll please — **Mike Baron, Mike Mignola** and **Rick Burchett**! Mike Baron's script beautifully evokes that by-gone era of elder races, man's ascendency and the battles between Chaos and Law. Mike Mignola's pencils somehow manage to be both wonderfully ethereal and very concrete. A hard combination to pull off under any circumstance, and one Mignola does with consummate skill. And then there's Rick Burchett, whose inks complement and intensify those qualities in the pencils. If this sounds like I think **Corum** will be a hit — you're right.

And to give credit where credit is due, here's the rundown for **Weird of the White Wolf** #2: script throughout by **Roy Thomas.** Pages 1, 2 and 11 pencils by **Michael T. Gilbert**, finishes by **George Freeman**, letters by **Ken Bruzenak.** *The Dreaming City* (pg 3-10) and *While the Gods Laugh* (pgs 12-28) art by **P. Craig Russell** and letters by **Tom Orzechowski.** Colors by **P. Craig Russell.** Whew.

And to keep your appetites whetted until next time (and for September's **Hawkmoon** and **Corum**) here's what you can see:



NEXT ISSUE: The third part of our adaptation of **Michael Moorcock**'s **Weird of the White Wolf** continues with the conclusion of *While the Gods Laugh* and part one of *The Singing Citadel.* By **Roy Thomas, P. Craig Russell, Michael T. Gilbert** and **George Freeman.** See you then.

—Laurel Fitch

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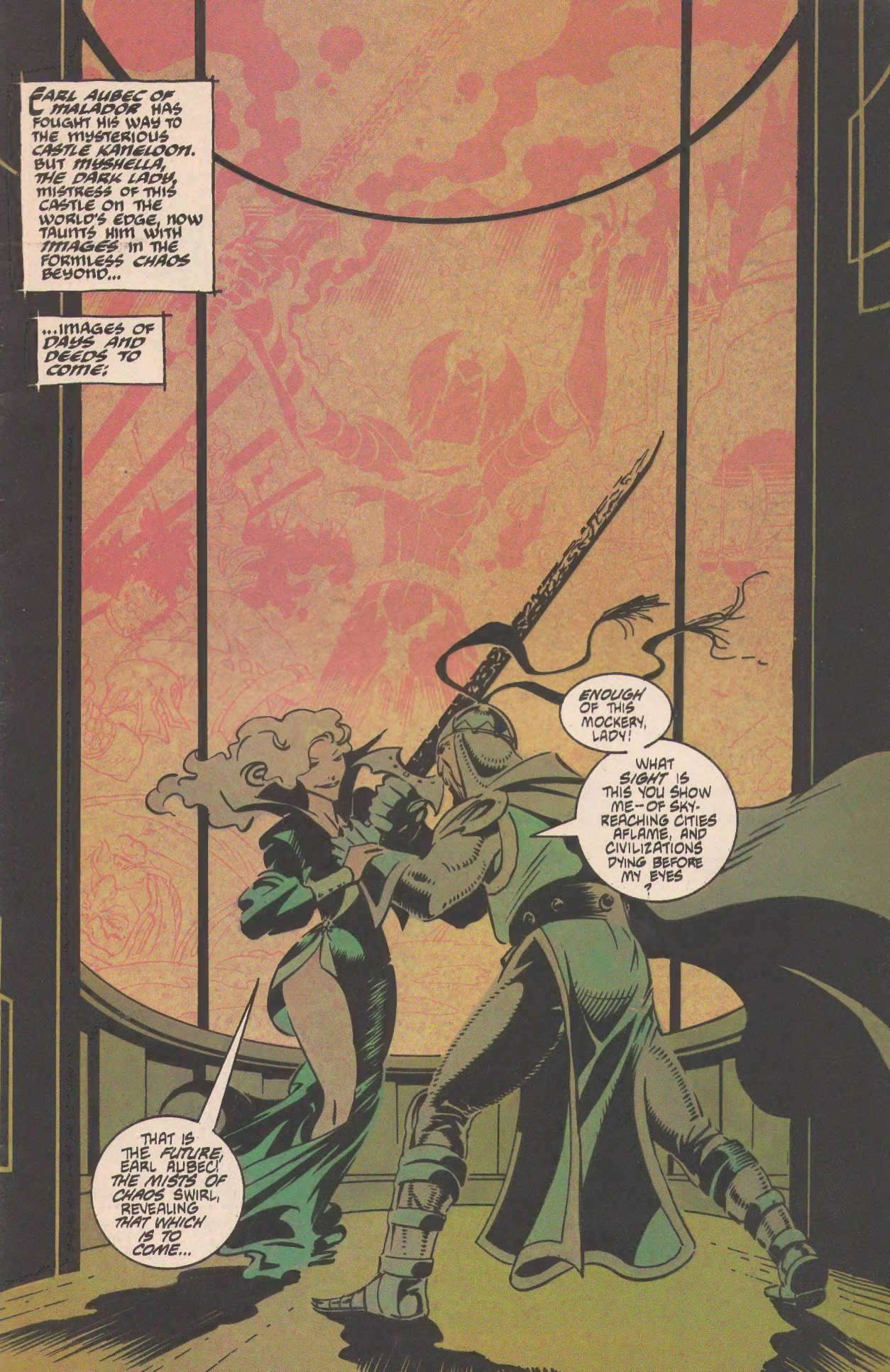
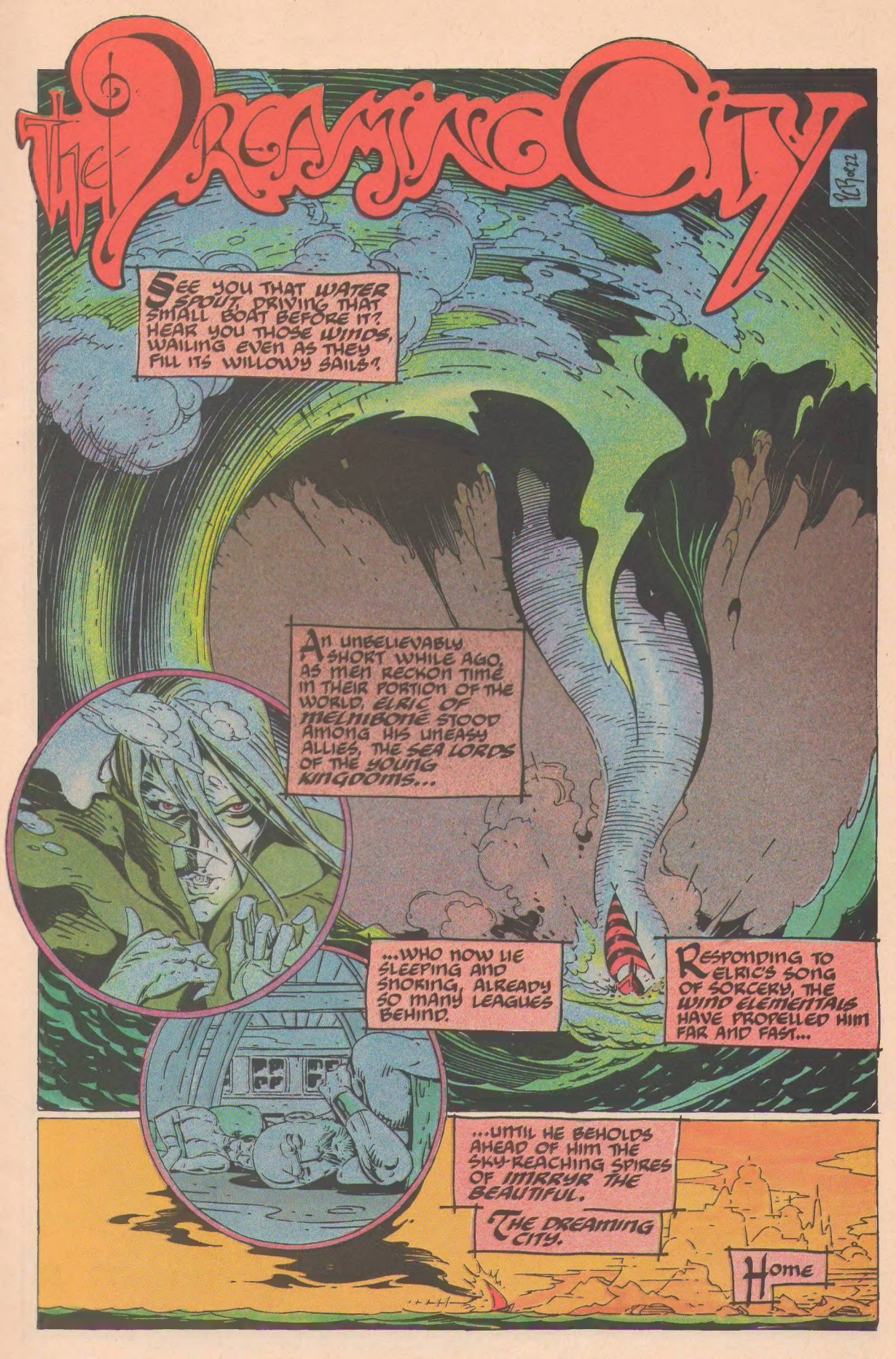
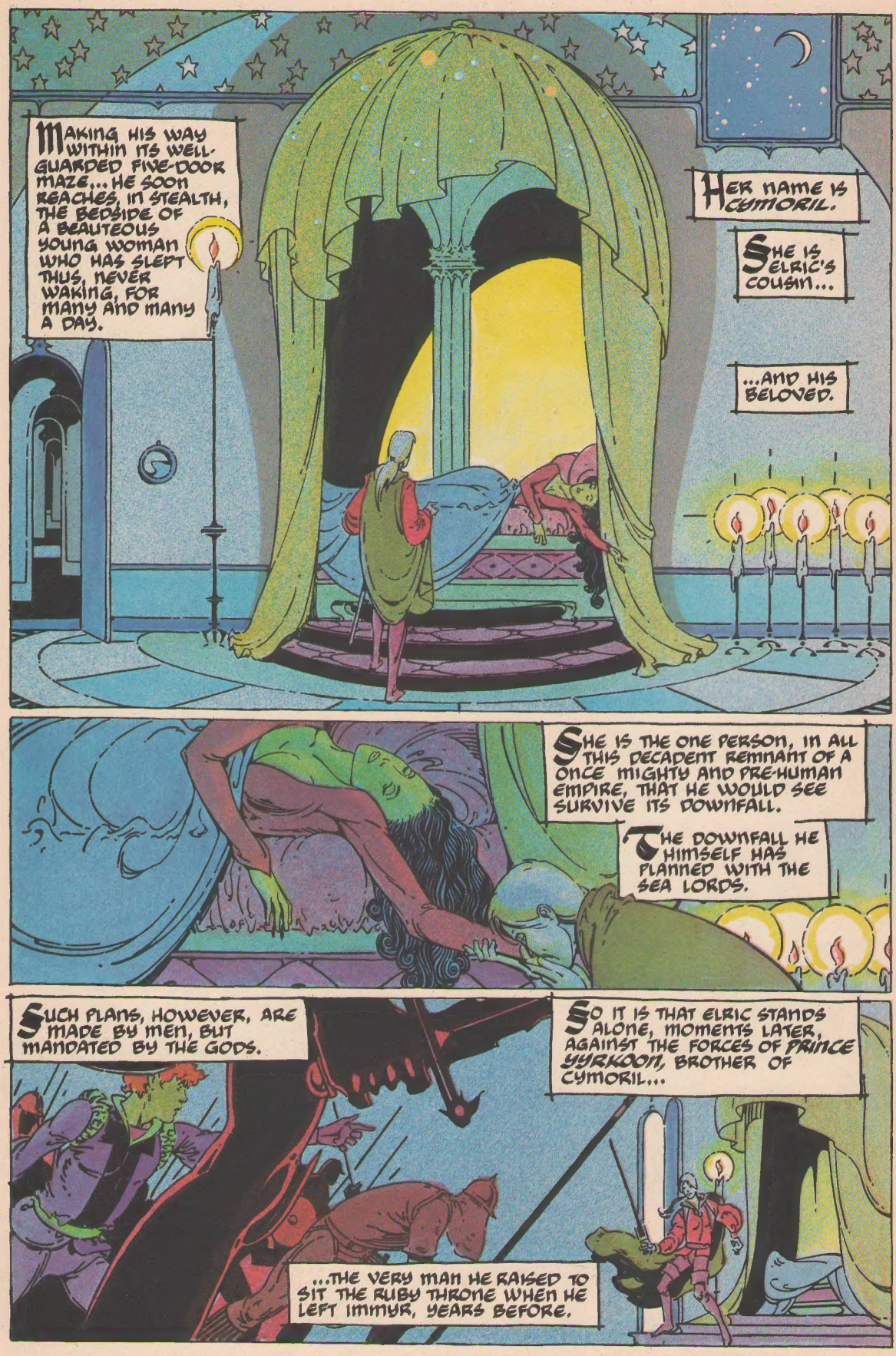
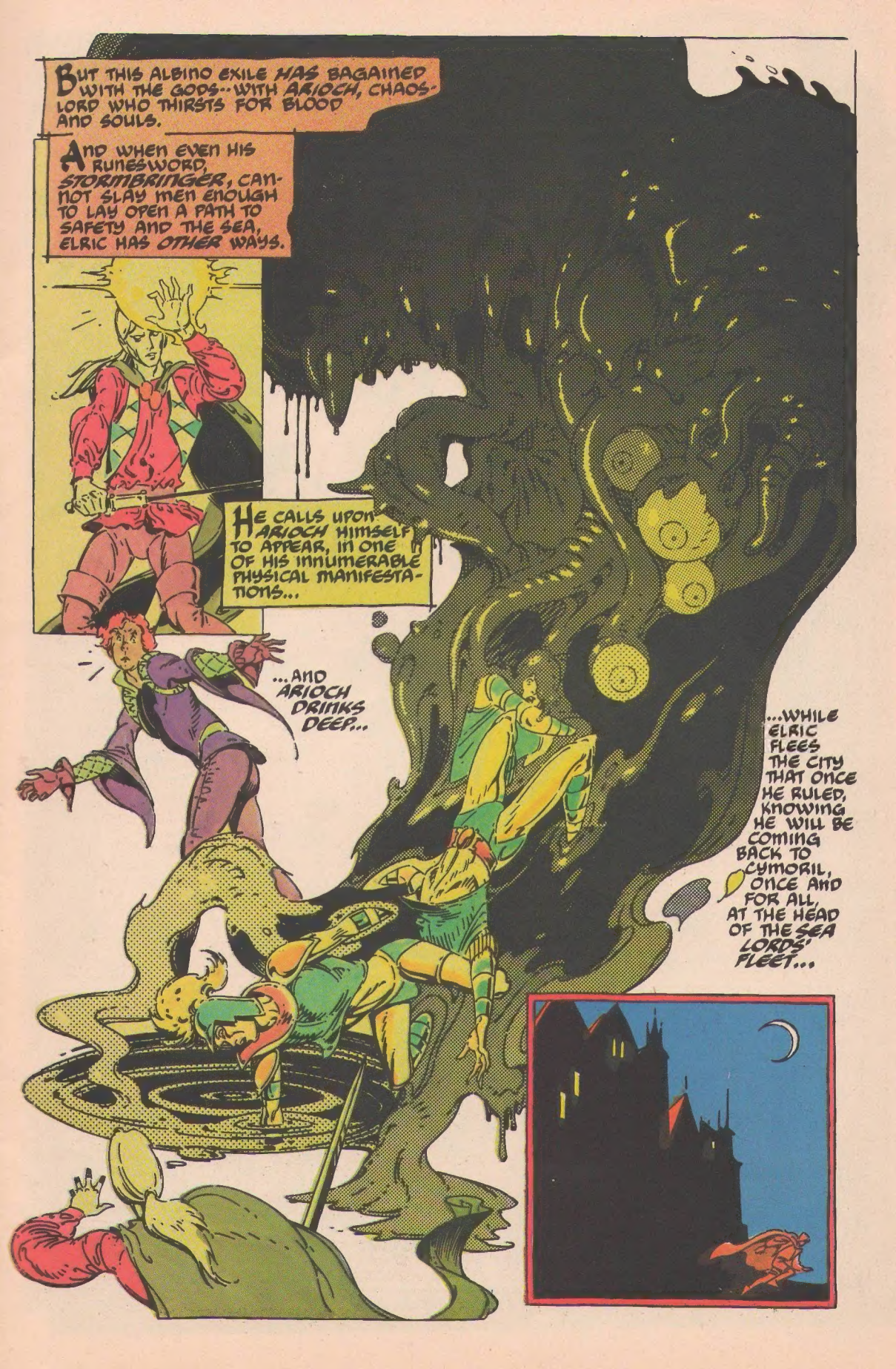
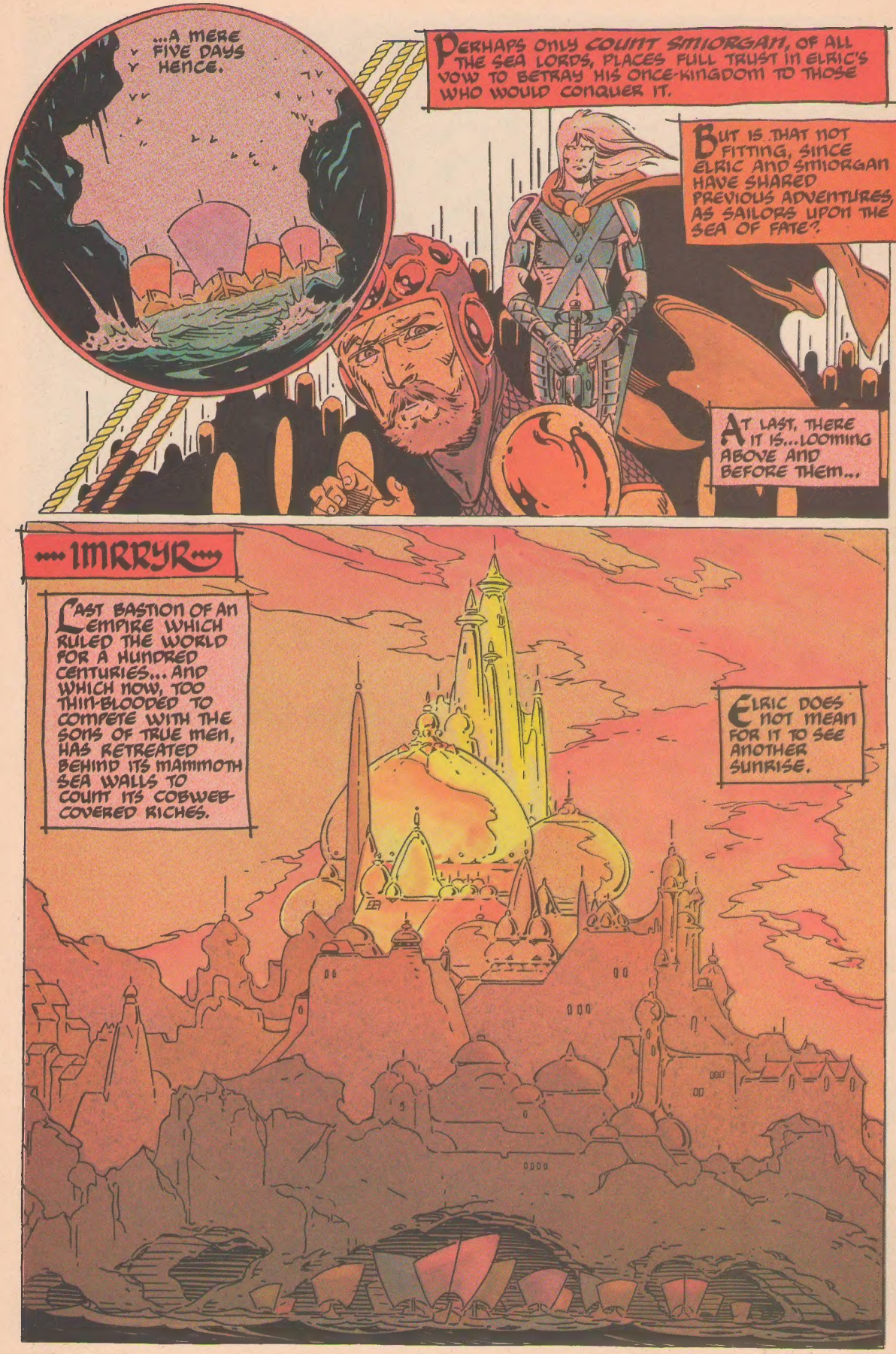

EARL AUBEC OF MALADOR HAS FOUGHT HIS WAY TO THE MYSTERIOUS CASTLE KAMELOOM. BUT MYSHELLA, THE DARK LADY, MISTRESS OF THIS CASTLE ON THE WORLD'S EDGE, NOW TAUNTS HIM WITH IMAGES IN THE FORMLESS CHAOS BEYOND...
...IMAGES OF DAYS AND DEEDS TO COME!
ENOUGH OF THIS MOCKERY, LADY!
WHAT SIGHT IS THIS YOU SHOW ME--OF SKY-REACHING CITIES AFLAME, AND CIVILIZATIONS DYING BEFORE MY EYES?
THAT IS THE FUTURE, EARL AUBEC! THE MISTS OF CHAOS SWIRL, REVEALING THAT WHICH IS TO COME...

THE FUTURE? NO MAN OR WOMAN KNOWS THAT, WOMAN- UNLESS THERE BE SORCERY INVOLVED!
WHERE THE WORLD'S EDGE MEETS CHAOS, THERE IS NEITHER SCIENCE NOR SORCERY...NO PAST, NO FUTURE, REALLY.
THERE IS ONLY THE ALL-CONSUMING PRESENT, ENDLESSLY CREATING AND RE-CREATING ITSELF.
LOOK YOU, AUBEC AND GROW WISE... IF NO HAPPIER...
...FOR YONDER ARE THE DREAMS WHICH YOUR SWORD MIGHT FORGE INTO REALITY.
EH? I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR WORDS MY LADY!
NO MATTER.
AND THAT IS THE ONE YOU CALLED... ELRIC?
YES. HE IS A MAN, AND HE IS MORE THAN A MAN.
FOR HE IS BUT ONE INCAR- NATION OF THE ETERNAL CHAMPION.
GAZE DEEPLY INTO THE MIST, EARL AUBEC, THAT YOU MAY LEARN THE TRAGIC STORY OF..

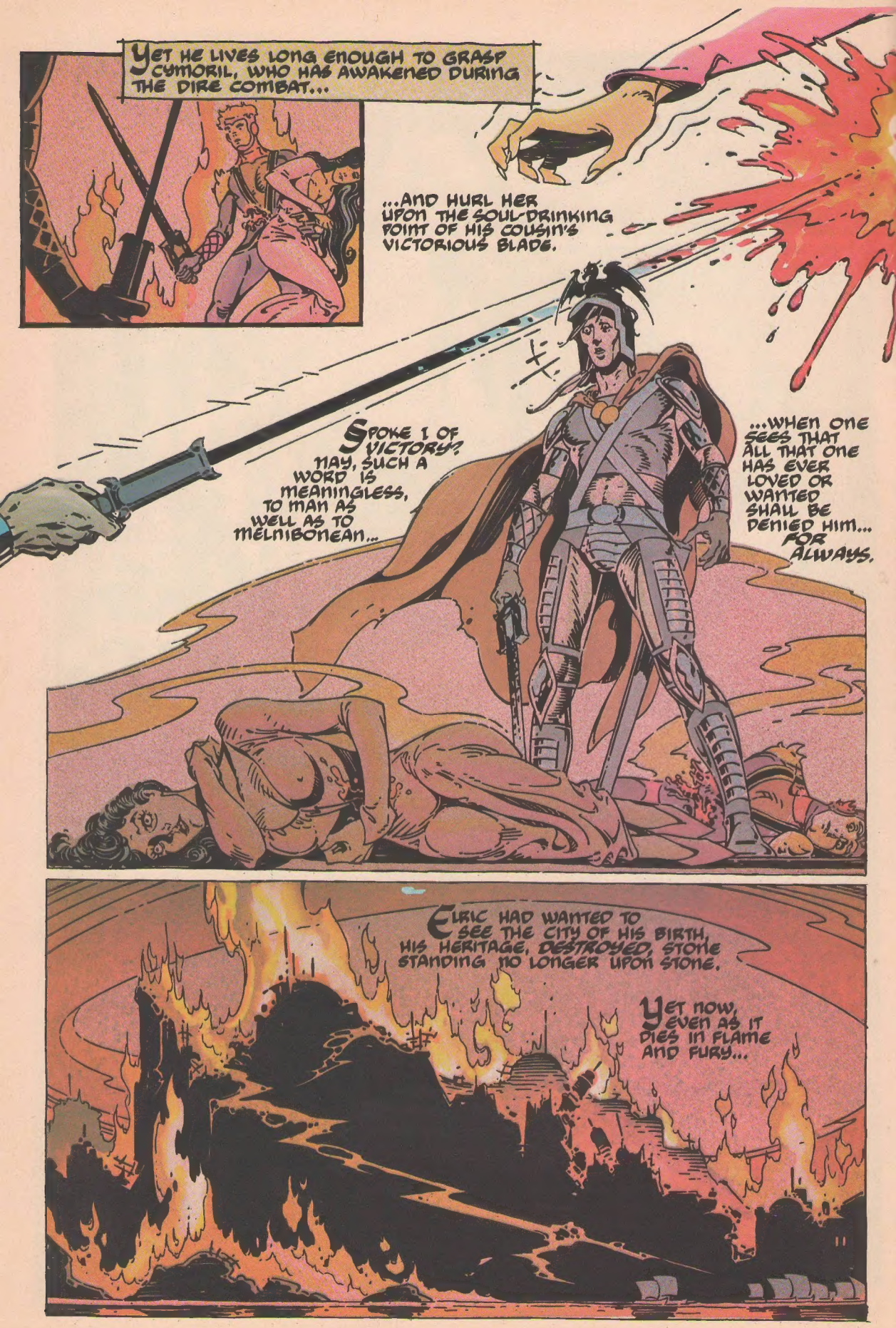

THE DREAMING CITY
SEE YOU THAT WATER SPOUT, DRIVING THAT SMALL BOAT BEFORE IT? HEAR YOU THOSE WINDS, WAILING EVEN AS THEY FILL ITS WILLOWY SAILS?
AN UNBELIEVABLY SHORT WHILE AGO, AS MEN RECKON TIME IN THEIR PORTION OF THE WORLD, ELRIC OF MELNIBONE STOOD AMONG HIS UNEASY ALLIES, THE SEA LORDS OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS...
...WHO NOW LIE SLEEPING AND SNORING, ALREADY SO MANY LEAGUES BEHIND.
RESPONDING TO ELRIC'S SONG OF SORCERY, THE WIND ELEMENTALS HAVE PROPELLED HIM FAR AND FAST...
...UNTIL HE BEHOLDS AHEAD OF HIM THE SKY-REACHING SPIRES OF IMRRYR THE BEAUTIFUL.
THE DREAMING CITY.
HOME


MAKING HIS WAY WITHIN ITS WELL-GUARDED FIVE-DOOR MAZE... HE SOON REACHES, IN STEALTH, THE BEDSIDE OF A BEAUTEOUS YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAS SLEPT THUS, NEVER WAKING, FOR MANY AND MANY A DAY.
HER NAME IS CYMORIL.
SHE IS ELRIC'S COUSIN...
...AND HIS BELOVED.
SHE IS THE ONE PERSON, IN ALL THIS DECADENT REMNANT OF A ONCE MIGHTY AND PRE-HUMAN EMPIRE, THAT HE WOULD SEE SURVIVE ITS DOWNFALL.
THE DOWNFALL HE HIMSELF HAS PLANNED WITH THE SEA LORDS.
SUCH PLANS, HOWEVER, ARE MADE BY MEN, BUT MANDATED BY THE GODS.
SO IT IS THAT ELRIC STANDS ALONE, MOMENTS LATER, AGAINST THE FORCES OF PRINCE YYRKOON, BROTHER OF CYMORIL...
...THE VERY MAN HE RAISED TO SIT THE RUBY THRONE WHEN HE LEFT IMMYR, YEARS BEFORE.

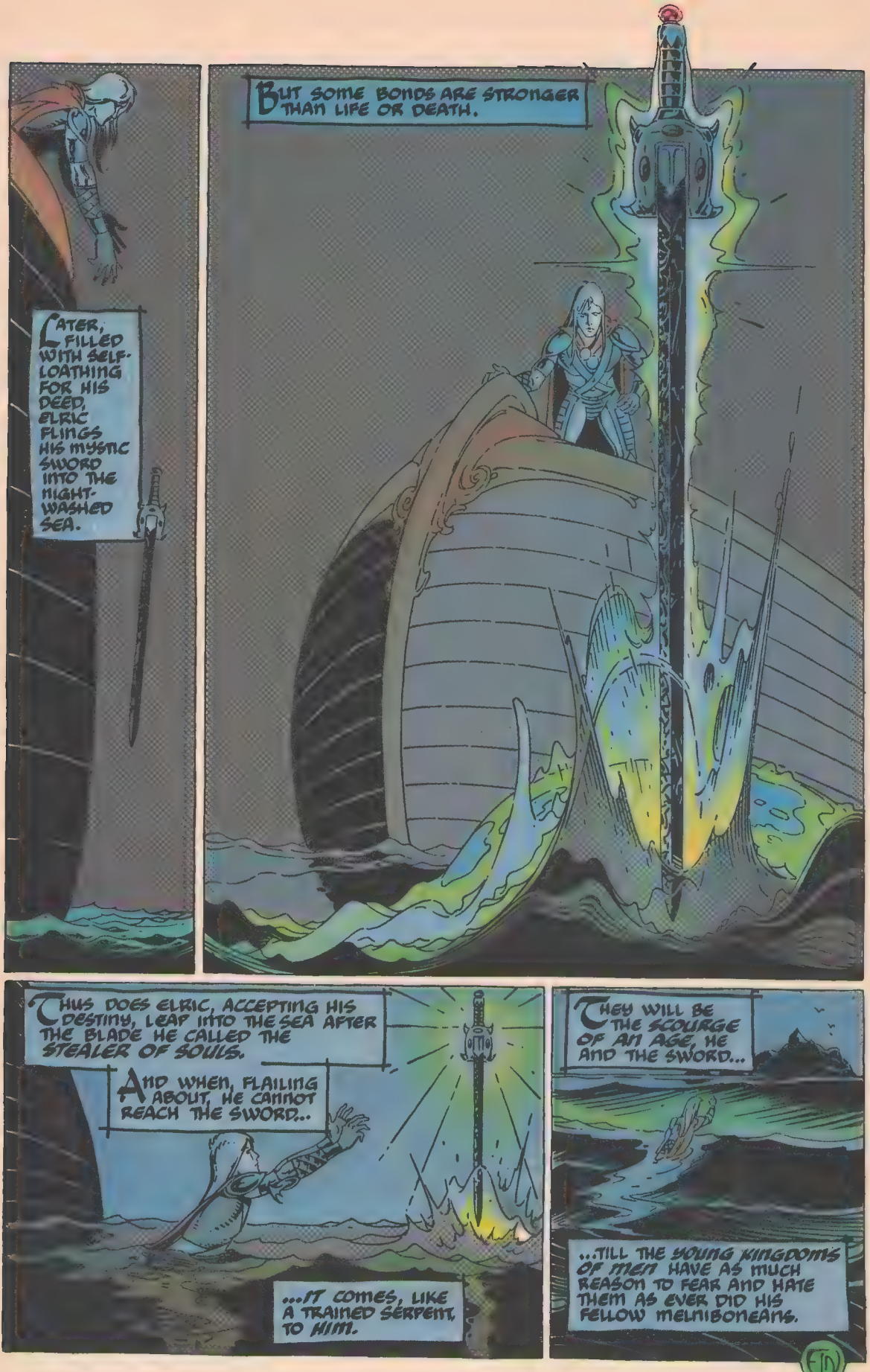

BUT THIS ALBINO EXILE HAS BARGAINED WITH THE GODS--WITH ARIOCH, CHAOS-LORD WHO THIRSTS FOR BLOOD AND SOULS.
AND WHEN EVEN HIS RUNESWORD, STORMBRINGER, CANNOT SLAY MEN ENOUGH TO LAY OPEN A PATH TO SAFETY AND THE SEA, ELRIC HAS OTHER WAYS.
HE CALLS UPON ARIOCH HIMSELF TO APPEAR, IN ONE OF HIS INNUMERABLE PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS...
...AND ARIOCH DRINKS DEEP...
...WHILE ELRIC FLEES THE CITY THAT ONCE HE RULED, KNOWING HE WILL BE COMING BACK TO CYMORIL, ONCE AND FOR ALL, AT THE HEAD OF THE SEA LORDS' FLEET...


...A MERE FIVE DAYS HENCE.
PERHAPS ONLY COUNT SMIORGAN, OF ALL THE SEA LORDS, PLACES FULL TRUST IN ELRIC'S VOW TO BETRAY HIS ONCE-KINGDOM TO THOSE WHO WOULD CONQUER IT.
BUT IS THAT NOT FITTING, SINCE ELRIC AND SMIORGAN HAVE SHARED PREVIOUS ADVENTURES, AS SAILORS UPON THE SEA OF FATE?.
AT LAST, THERE IT IS...LOOMING ABOVE AND BEFORE THEM...
....IMRRYR....
LAST BASTION OF AN EMPIRE WHICH RULED THE WORLD FOR A HUNDRED CENTURIES... AND WHICH NOW, TOO THIN-BLOODED TO COMPETE WITH THE SONS OF TRUE MEN, HAS RETREATED BEHIND ITS MAMMOTH SEA WALLS TO COUNT ITS COBWEB-COVERED RICHES.
ELRIC DOES NOT MEAN FOR IT TO SEE ANOTHER SUNRISE.

With him to guide them, the Sea Lords' ships navigate the watery labyrinth and begin the final assault on the ancient city.
But Elric cares only for the safety of Cymoril.
Imagine the horror that wells up within him, then, when he returns to her boudoir and finds her...gone.
It is the hated Yyrkoon's work, he knows...
...and the vile prince awaits him atop fire-shot stairs, wielding Mournblade, twin sword to Elric's own Stormbringer.
So, at last they fight the fight that had to come...
...and Yyrkoon is sorely wounded.


YET HE LIVES LONG ENOUGH TO GRASP CYMORIL, WHO HAS AWAKENED DURING THE DIRE COMBAT...
...AND HURL HER UPON THE SOUL-DRINKING POINT OF HIS COUSIN'S VICTORIOUS BLADE.
SPOKE I OF VICTORY? NAY, SUCH A WORD IS MEANINGLESS, TO MAN AS WELL AS TO MELNIBONEAN...
...WHEN ONE SEES THAT ALL THAT ONE HAS EVER LOVED OR WANTED SHALL BE DENIED HIM... FOR ALWAYS.
ELRIC HAD WANTED TO SEE THE CITY OF HIS BIRTH, HIS HERITAGE, DESTROYED, STONE STANDING NO LONGER UPON STONE.
YET NOW, EVEN AS IT DIES IN FLAME AND FURY...

...IT MOCKS HIM, AS IF WITH THE MADDENED VOICE OF THE DEAD PRINCE YYRKOON HIMSELF.
NOR HAVE THE DESPAIRING IMRRYRIANS A LAST TRUMP TO PLAY, AS THE SEA LORDS DEPART.
FOR THEY UNLEASH THEIR *FLYING DRAGONS*, WHOSE FIERY BREATH SETS SHIP AND SAIL ALIKE *ABLAZE*.
CALLING UPON A *WITCH-WIND*, ELRIC ESCAPES IN A COMMANDEERED VESSEL.
BUT *NOT ONE* OF THE SEA LORDS ESCAPES TO BOAST OF THE CONQUEST OF IMRRYR...
...NO, NOT EVEN *SMIORGAN*, WHO MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED BETTER OF HIS FORMER FRIEND.


LATER, FILLED WITH SELF-LOATHING FOR HIS DEED, ELRIC FLINGS HIS MYSTIC SWORD INTO THE NIGHT-WASHED SEA.
BUT SOME BONDS ARE STRONGER THAN LIFE OR DEATH.
THUS DOES ELRIC, ACCEPTING HIS DESTINY, LEAP INTO THE SEA AFTER THE BLADE HE CALLED THE STEALER OF SOULS.
AND WHEN, FLAILING ABOUT, HE CANNOT REACH THE SWORD..
...IT COMES, LIKE A TRAINED SERPENT, TO HIM.
THEY WILL BE THE SCOURGE OF AN AGE, HE AND THE SWORD...
..TILL THE YOUNG KINGDOMS OF MEN HAVE AS MUCH REASON TO FEAR AND HATE THEM AS EVER DID HIS FELLOW MELNIBONEANS.

FIRST NOTES

TOO BIG FOR ONE BOOK

Okay. Let me see if I've got this straight now.

There's this robot, you see? A very *big* robot. And he goes from one dimension to another by *mistake*, and ends up in the *wrong* book. Because he's got his own book now. But I guess it's easy to get confused. I mean he's already had his own book once before and been in two other books. So that makes a total of five... if you count his own book twice.

Wait a minute. Let me start over.

There was this guy, you see? And he kept hanging around the office... which was only logical because he worked there. His name was **Doug Rice** (and it still is, strangely enough). He had this idea for a giant robot comic book series. And we had this comic that nobody was buying anyway; so we figured, what the hell, give the guy a shot.

Thus was born **Dynamo Joe** in the back of the last three issues of the ill-fated **Mars**. And people *liked* it. Only thing was we didn't have any place to put it after Mars folded, and it languished in obscurity until we concocted the equally ill-fated **First Adventures**. And people liked it even *more*. Which led to the Dynamo Joe mini-series. And then people starting *complaining* because it was only three issues and not a continuing series. So we decided to bring it back as a regular series. But we needed some way to re-introduce the character. So we came up with this crossover idea with **Grimjack**. And then we realized we could reprint the original three-part story from the Mars back-up days, which we figured a lot of folks had never seen (unless they snuck a peek when no one was looking, because they sure didn't *pay* for it). So there we were, with *two* books, both featuring Dynamo Joe, both scheduled for release in September.

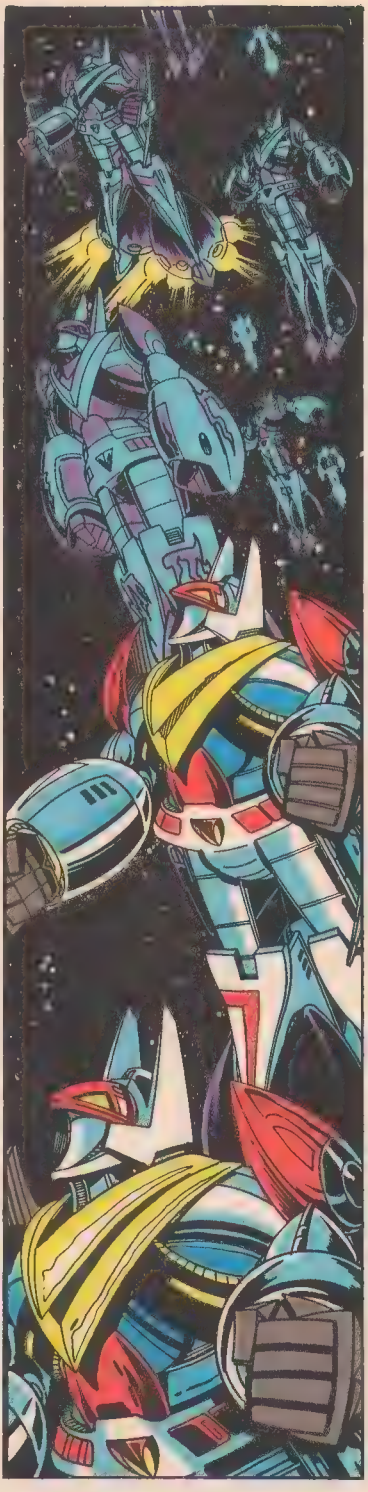
That's right. **Grimjack** #30, featuring the battling behemoth, and the **Dynamo Joe Special**, both on sale next month, with the continuing monthly adventures of DJ following in October. Buy 'em all just to be on the safe side.

MORE MOORCOCK

September also brings us the beginning of a new **Michael Moorcock** adaptation: **Corum**, a deluxe, bi-monthly series by **Mike Baron** and **Mike Mignola**; as well as the start of **Hawkmoon: The Mad God's Amulet**, our second four-part limited series in the continuing adaptation of *The History of Runestaff*, by **Gerry Conway** and **Rafael Kayanan**.

THE NEXUS LIST

Yes, all this in September, not to mention the impressive list of all-star **Nexus** fill-in artists starting, coincidentally, with **Mike Mignola**. But I can see I've already mentioned it, so I might as well tell you that the following two issues will be drawn by **Rick Veitch** and **Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez**, respectively, while the Dude works on his tan. All, of course, written by Nexus co-creator **Mike Baron**.



FIRST IN AUGUST

American Flagg #35: Reuben's out to cheer up Bill, but Bill won't have to worry about Q-USA long -- someone's out to kill him. By **Steven Grant, Mark Badger** and **Randy Emberlin**. Plus Bob Violence by Grant, **Norm Breyfogle** and **Rick Burchett**.

Badger #18: There's a road rally going on in Wisconsin, and two of the drivers are out to settle a score with the Badger. By **Mike Baron, Bill Reinhold** and **Rick Bryant**. And the conclusion to Zoomtown by Baron, **Craig Brasfield** and **Brian Thomas**. Deluxe series.

Elric: Weird of the White Wolf #2: Adapting *"The Dreaming City"* and part one of *"While the Gods Laugh."* By **Roy Thomas, P. Craig Russell, Michael T. Gilbert** and **George Freeman**. Deluxe, bi-monthly series.

Grimjack #29: A special issue by creator/writer **John Ostrander** and guest penciller **Shawn McManus**. Gaunt is hired by a woman to find her son's killer. But the trail leads to the victim's brother! Inks by **Hilary Barta**. And **Fred Hembeck** visits Munden's Bar.

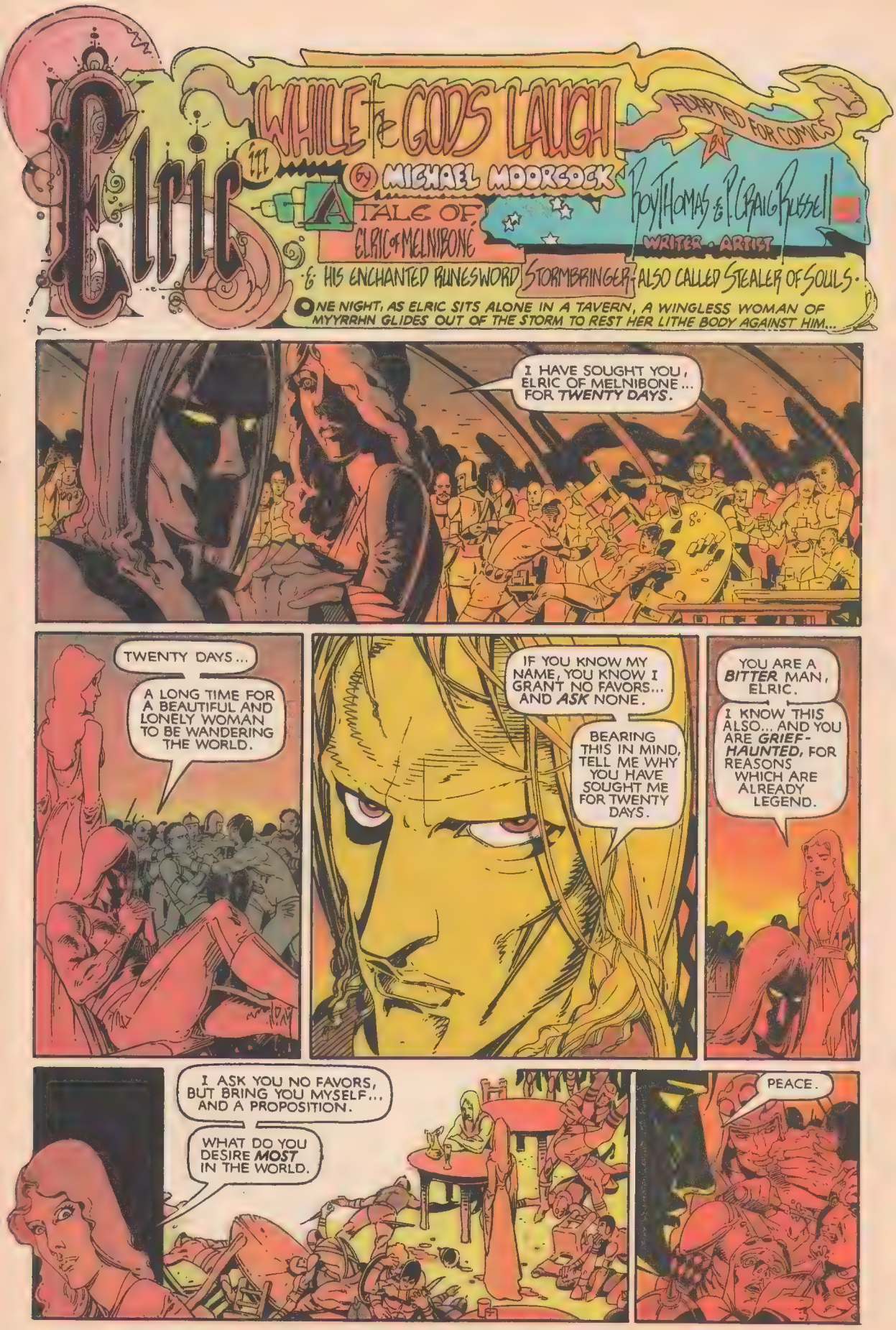
Nexus #27: Horatio's uncle pays a visit to Ylum, but is his purpose just social or has he brought a new form of fanatical terrorism to the sanctuary of Nexus? By **Mike Baron, Steve Rude** and **John Nyberg**. Plus: the *last* Clonezone story? By Baron and **Mark A. Nelson**. Deluxe series.

Jon Sable, Freelance #43: Jon discovers that terrorists have selected a New York target -- but what? The conclusion to "Assault on a Lady." Story and art by **Mike Grell**. Deluxe series.

Shatter #6: Shatter is rescued by Ravenant, and their prisoner has information on PAC's new offensive. But is the information a lucky break or a trap? By **Peter B. Gillis, Steve Erwin** and **Bob Dienethal**. Deluxe, bi-monthly series.

Whisper #4: If Alex is really dead, then who's wearing the Whisper costume? And is the new Whisper out to nail Eckhart for justice or revenge? By **Steven Grant, Norm Breyfogle** and **John Nyberg**. Bi-monthly series.

BY THE GODS! IS THIS THE FUTURE YOU WOULD SHOW ME, DARK LADY?
A MAN WHO KILLED HIS LOVER-- AND DESTROYED HIS PEOPLE?
NO MORE! I BEG YOU! IT IS TOO TRAGIC!
YOU MUST BEHOLD MORE, AUBEC OF MALADOR, YOU SEE, ALREADY NEW IMAGES START TO FORM AMID THE CHAOS.
YES...
...IMAGES...


Elric
WHILE the GODS LAUGH
by MICHAEL MOORCOCK
A TALE OF ELRIC of MELNIBONE
& HIS ENCHANTED RUNESWORD STORMBRINGER, ALSO CALLED STEALER OF SOULS
ADAPTED FOR COMICS BY
ROY THOMAS & P. CRAIG RUSSELL
WRITER • ARTIST
ONE NIGHT, AS ELRIC SITS ALONE IN A TAVERN, A WINGLESS WOMAN OF MYYRRHN GLIDES OUT OF THE STORM TO REST HER LITHE BODY AGAINST HIM...
I HAVE SOUGHT YOU, ELRIC OF MELNIBONE... FOR TWENTY DAYS.
TWENTY DAYS...
A LONG TIME FOR A BEAUTIFUL AND LONELY WOMAN TO BE WANDERING THE WORLD.
IF YOU KNOW MY NAME, YOU KNOW I GRANT NO FAVORS... AND ASK NONE.
BEARING THIS IN MIND, TELL ME WHY YOU HAVE SOUGHT ME FOR TWENTY DAYS.
YOU ARE A BITTER MAN, ELRIC.
I KNOW THIS ALSO... AND YOU ARE GRIEF-HAUNTED, FOR REASONS WHICH ARE ALREADY LEGEND.
I ASK YOU NO FAVORS, BUT BRING YOU MYSELF... AND A PROPOSITION.
WHAT DO YOU DESIRE MOST IN THE WORLD.
PEACE.

Did you MISS last month's issue?

Too bad! We're probably sold out by now. Maybe you can borrow a friend's copy and find out what happened.

If you had a SUBSCRIPTION, you'd never miss a single issue!

If you had a SUBSCRIPTION, every issue would come directly to your house! You wouldn't have to go out or anything!

If you had a SUBSCRIPTION, there'd be something in your mailbox besides depressing bills!

Now, if only you had a SUBSCRIPTION COUPON you could fill out and send in. Wait! What's that down there?

ONLY $15 FOR 12 ISSUES
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- ☐ SABLE
- ☐ SHATTER
- ☐ DREADSTAR
- ☐ CORUM

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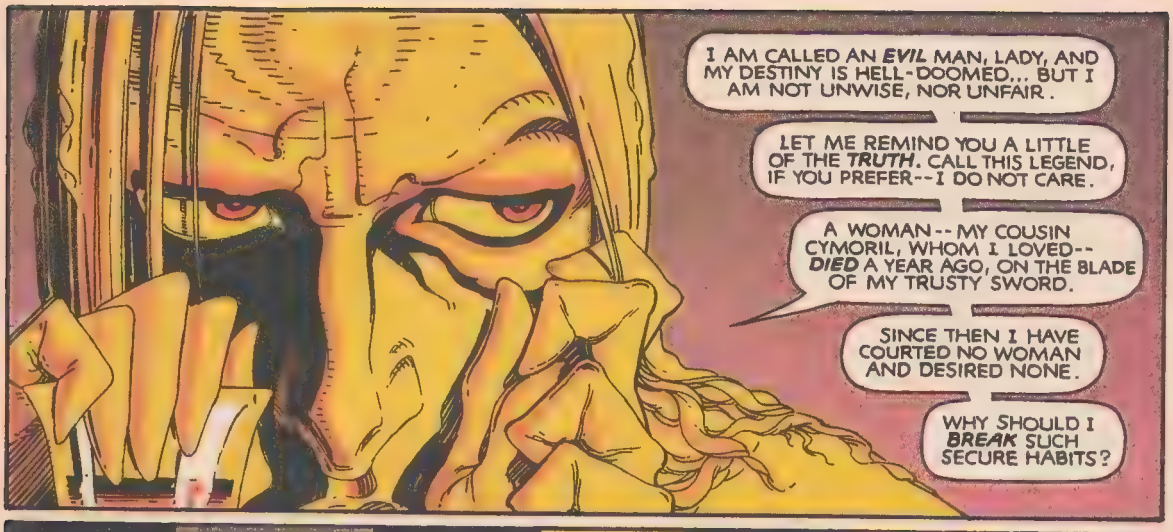
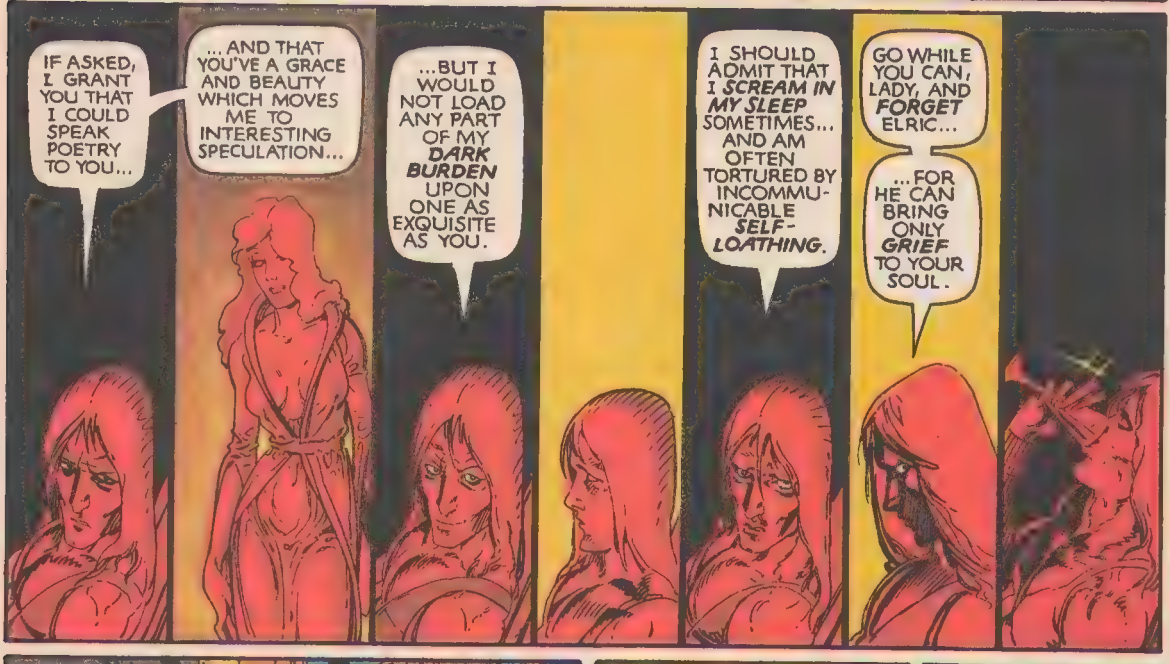
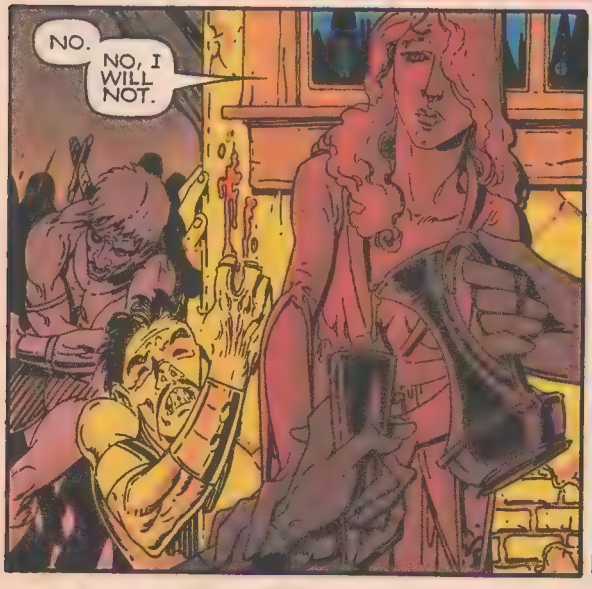
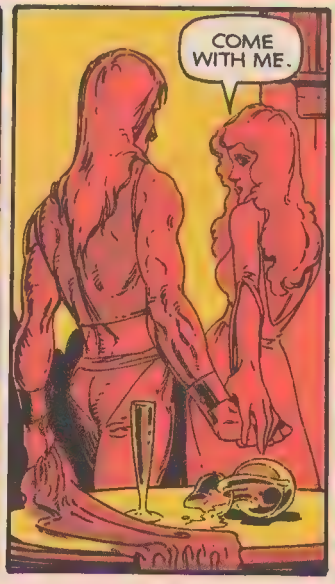
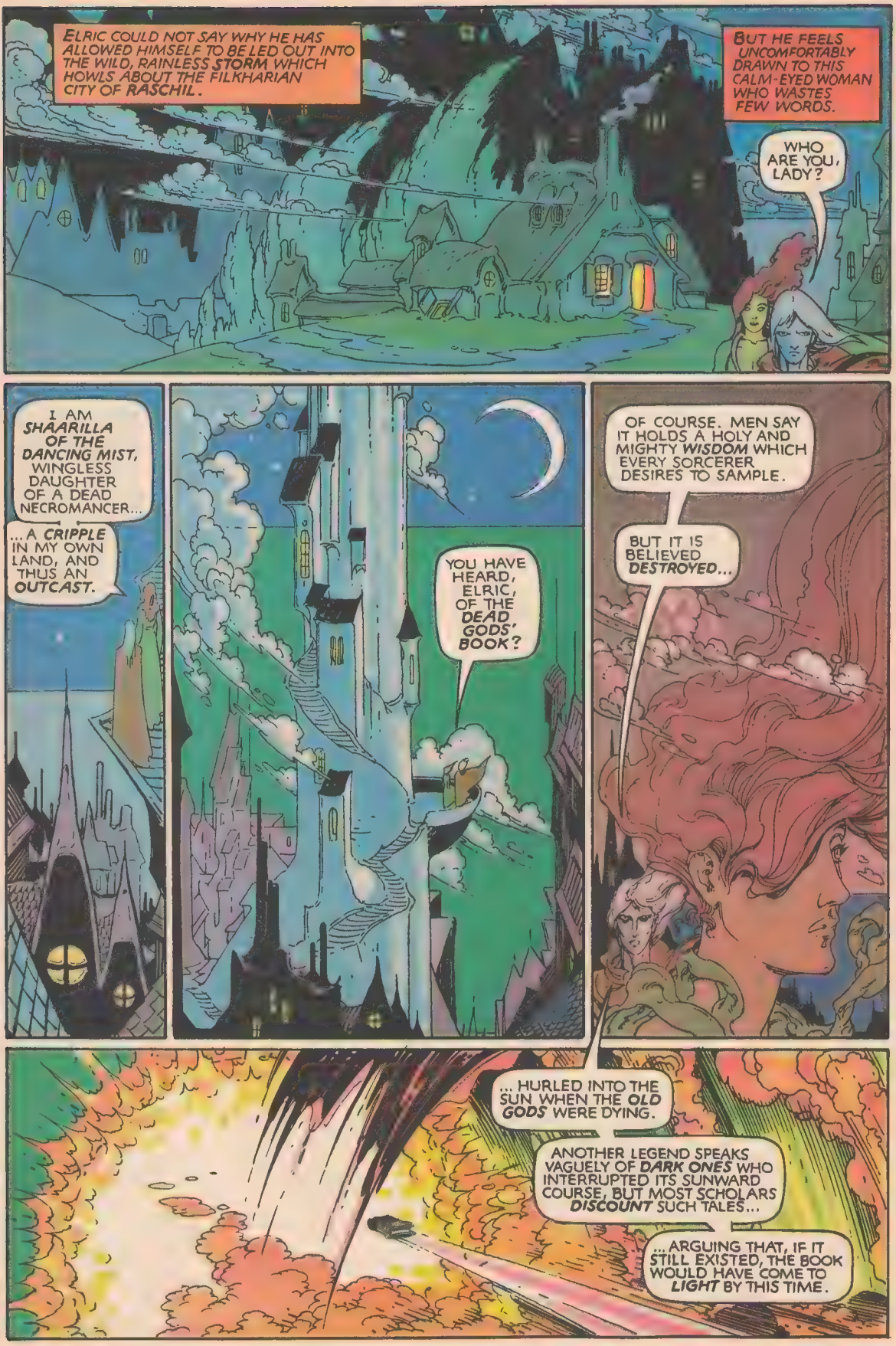

I AM CALLED AN *EVIL* MAN, LADY, AND MY DESTINY IS HELL-DOOMED... BUT I AM NOT UNWISE, NOR UNFAIR.
LET ME REMIND YOU A LITTLE OF THE *TRUTH*. CALL THIS LEGEND, IF YOU PREFER--I DO NOT CARE.
A WOMAN--MY COUSIN CYMORIL, WHOM I LOVED--*DIED* A YEAR AGO, ON THE BLADE OF MY TRUSTY SWORD.
SINCE THEN I HAVE COURTED NO WOMAN AND DESIRED NONE.
WHY SHOULD I *BREAK* SUCH SECURE HABITS?

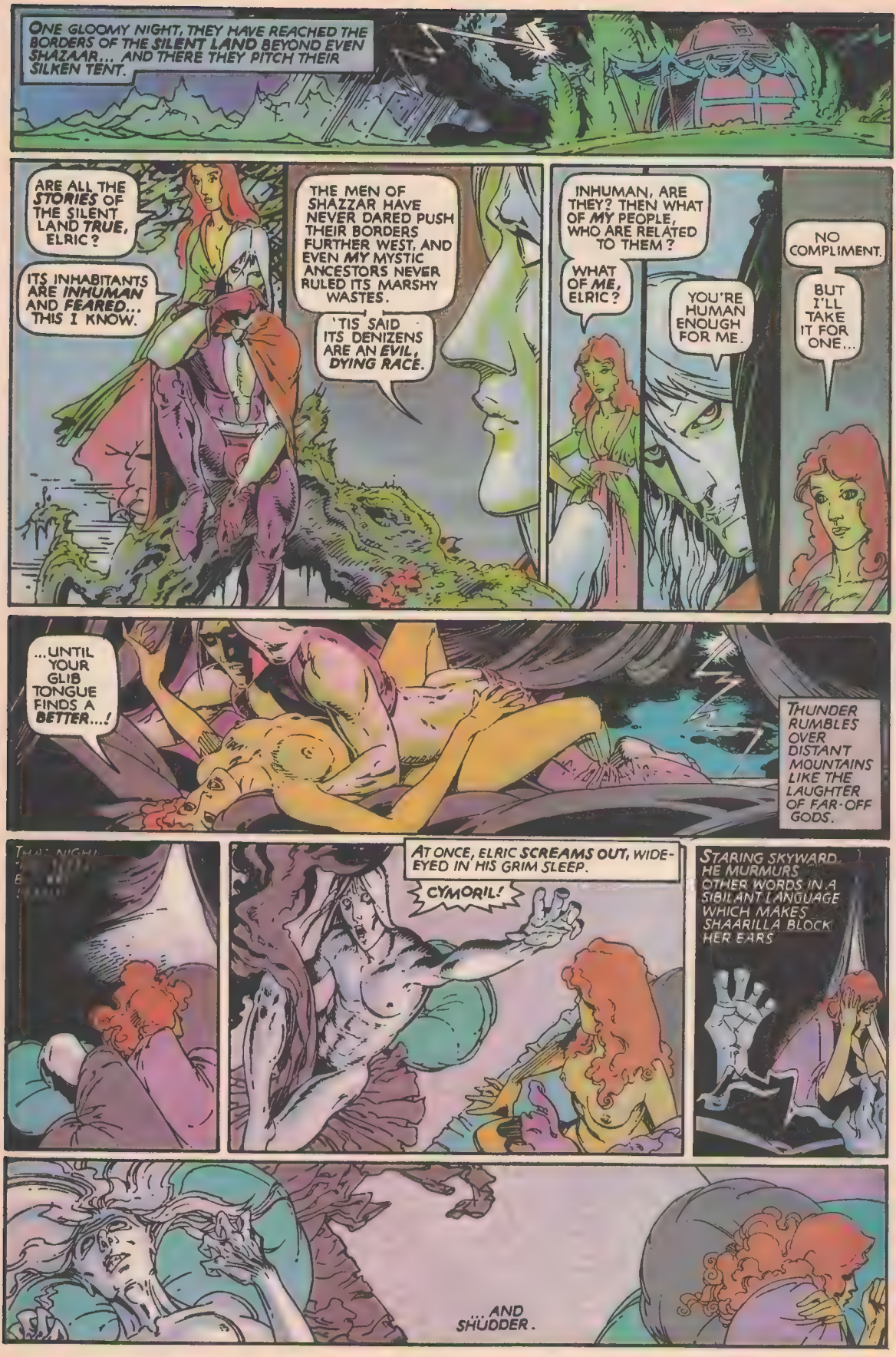

IF ASKED, I GRANT YOU THAT I COULD SPEAK POETRY TO YOU...
...AND THAT YOU'VE A GRACE AND BEAUTY WHICH MOVES ME TO INTERESTING SPECULATION...
...BUT I WOULD NOT LOAD ANY PART OF MY *DARK BURDEN* UPON ONE AS EXQUISITE AS YOU.
I SHOULD ADMIT THAT I *SCREAM IN MY SLEEP* SOMETIMES... AND AM OFTEN TORTURED BY INCOMMUNICABLE *SELF-LOATHING*.
GO WHILE YOU CAN, LADY, AND *FORGET* ELRIC...
...FOR HE CAN BRING ONLY *GRIEF* TO YOUR SOUL.


NO.
NO, I WILL NOT.


COME WITH ME.

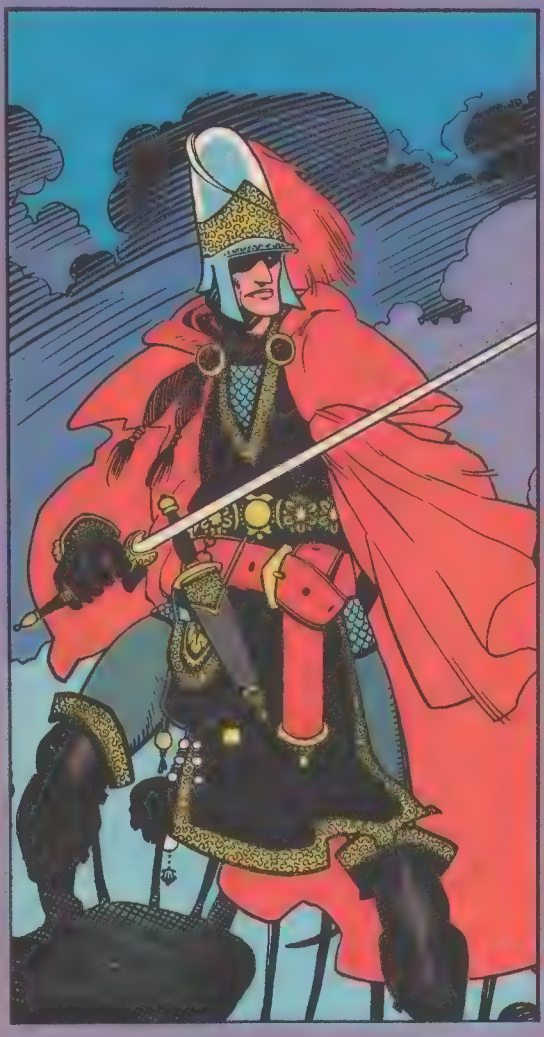

ELRIC COULD NOT SAY WHY HE HAS ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE LED OUT INTO THE WILD, RAINLESS STORM WHICH HOWLS ABOUT THE FILKHARIAN CITY OF RASCHIL.
BUT HE FEELS UNCOMFORTABLY DRAWN TO THIS CALM-EYED WOMAN WHO WASTES FEW WORDS.
WHO ARE YOU, LADY?
I AM SHAARILLA OF THE DANCING MIST, WINGLESS DAUGHTER OF A DEAD NECROMANCER...
...A CRIPPLE IN MY OWN LAND, AND THUS AN OUTCAST.
YOU HAVE HEARD, ELRIC, OF THE DEAD GODS' BOOK?
OF COURSE. MEN SAY IT HOLDS A HOLY AND MIGHTY WISDOM WHICH EVERY SORCERER DESIRES TO SAMPLE.
BUT IT IS BELIEVED DESTROYED...
...HURLED INTO THE SUN WHEN THE OLD GODS WERE DYING.
ANOTHER LEGEND SPEAKS VAGUELY OF DARK ONES WHO INTERRUPTED ITS SUNWARD COURSE, BUT MOST SCHOLARS DISCOUNT SUCH TALES...
...ARGUING THAT, IF IT STILL EXISTED, THE BOOK WOULD HAVE COME TO LIGHT BY THIS TIME.

WHY DO YOU MENTION THE BOOK?
I KNOW THAT IT EXISTS... AND I KNOW WHERE IT IS.
MY FATHER ACQUIRED THE KNOWLEDGE JUST BEFORE HE DIED.
MYSELF... AND THE BOOK... YOU MAY HAVE IF YOU HELP ME GET IT.
COULD THE SECRET OF PEACE BE CONTAINED IN THE BOOK? ELRIC WONDERS
WILL HE, IF HE FINDS IT, BE ABLE TO DISPENSE AT LAST WITH HIS RUNESWORD STORMBRINGER, WHICH RULES HIS LIFE LIKE A MUTE TYRANT?
IF YOU WANT THE BOOK SO BADLY THAT YOU SEEK MY HELP, WHY DO YOU NOT WISH TO KEEP IT?
BECAUSE, BEING NO SORCERESS, I WOULD NEVER BE SAFE WITH SUCH A VOLUME IN MY HANDS.
I NEED ONLY ONE SMALL PART OF ITS WISDOM.
Oh? AND WHAT IS THAT?
WHEN WE HAVE THE BOOK, YOU WILL HAVE YOUR ANSWER.
NOT BEFORE.
THAT ANSWER IS GOOD ENOUGH...
... AND IT APPEALS TO ME.
HALF BEFORE HE REALIZES IT, HE HAS PRESSED HIS COLORLESS LIPS TO HER SCARLET MOUTH.
ELRIC AND SHAARILLA RIDE WESTWARD THAT VERY NIGHT, TOWARD THE SEA... AND THE LUSH PLAINS OF SHAZZAR WHICH LIE BEYOND IT.


ONE GLOOMY NIGHT, THEY HAVE REACHED THE BORDERS OF THE SILENT LAND BEYOND EVEN SHAZAAR... AND THERE THEY PITCH THEIR SILKEN TENT.
ARE ALL THE STORIES OF THE SILENT LAND TRUE, ELRIC?
ITS INHABITANTS ARE INHUMAN AND FEARED... THIS I KNOW.
THE MEN OF SHAZZAR HAVE NEVER DARED PUSH THEIR BORDERS FURTHER WEST, AND EVEN MY MYSTIC ANCESTORS NEVER RULED ITS MARSHY WASTES.
'TIS SAID ITS DENIZENS ARE AN EVIL, DYING RACE.
INHUMAN, ARE THEY? THEN WHAT OF MY PEOPLE, WHO ARE RELATED TO THEM?
WHAT OF ME, ELRIC?
YOU'RE HUMAN ENOUGH FOR ME.
NO COMPLIMENT.
BUT I'LL TAKE IT FOR ONE...
...UNTIL YOUR GLIB TONGUE FINDS A BETTER...!
THUNDER RUMBLES OVER DISTANT MOUNTAINS LIKE THE LAUGHTER OF FAR-OFF GODS.
AT ONCE, ELRIC SCREAMS OUT, WIDE-EYED IN HIS GRIM SLEEP.
CYMORIL!
STARING SKYWARD, HE MURMURS OTHER WORDS IN A SIBILANT LANGUAGE WHICH MAKES SHAARILLA BLOCK HER EARS
...AND SHUDDER.

MORE MOORCOCK!

CORUM



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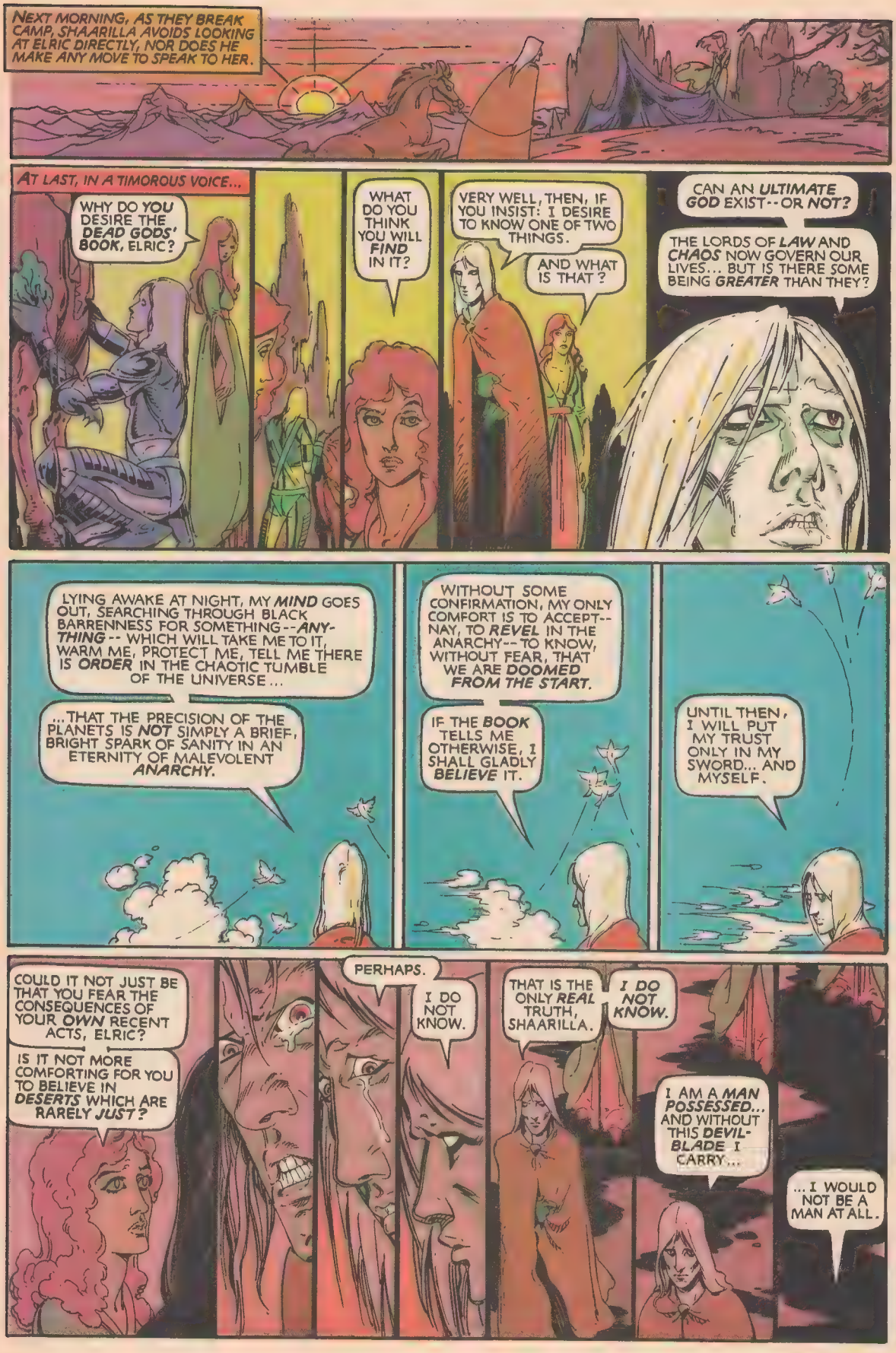
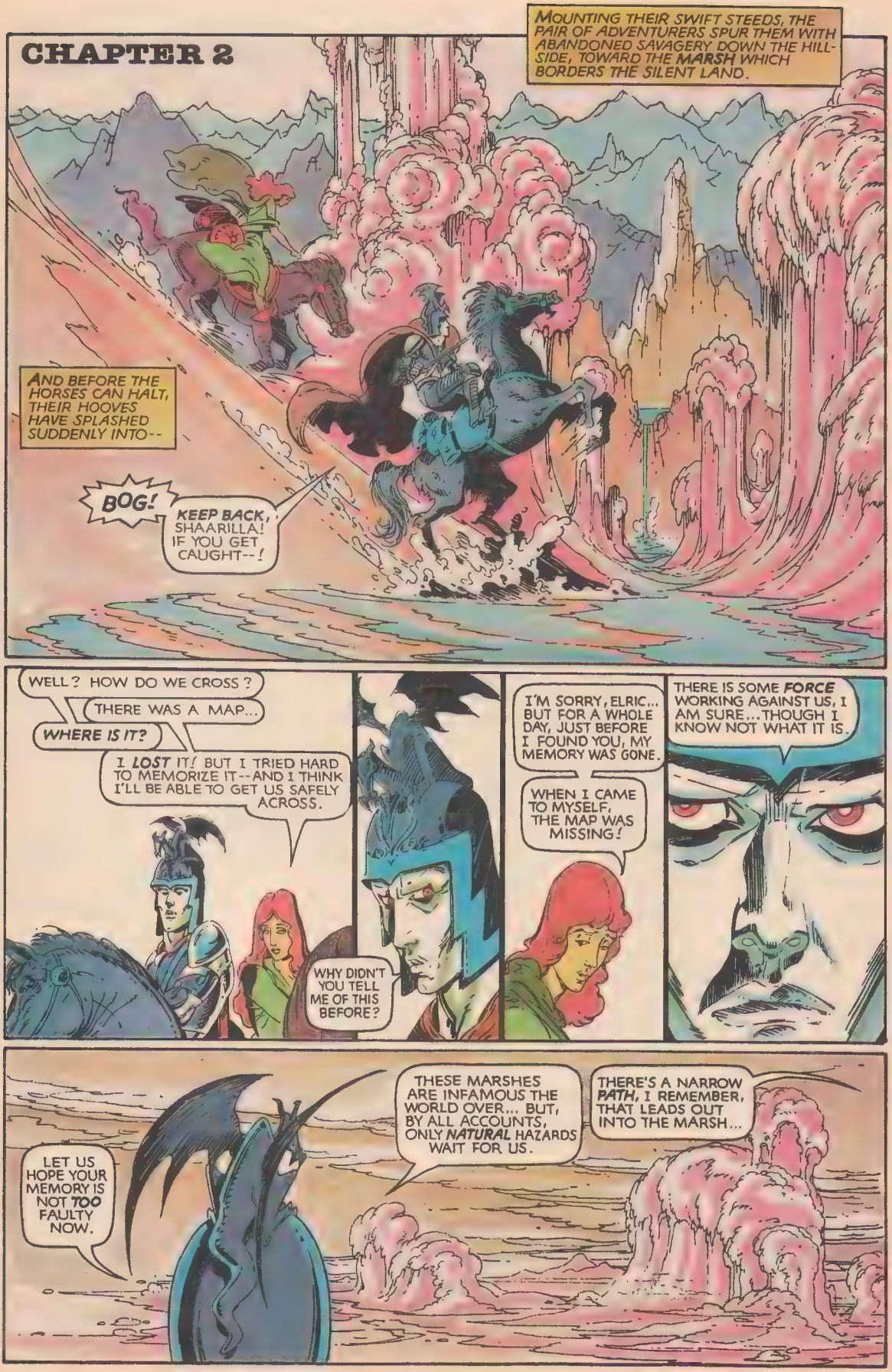
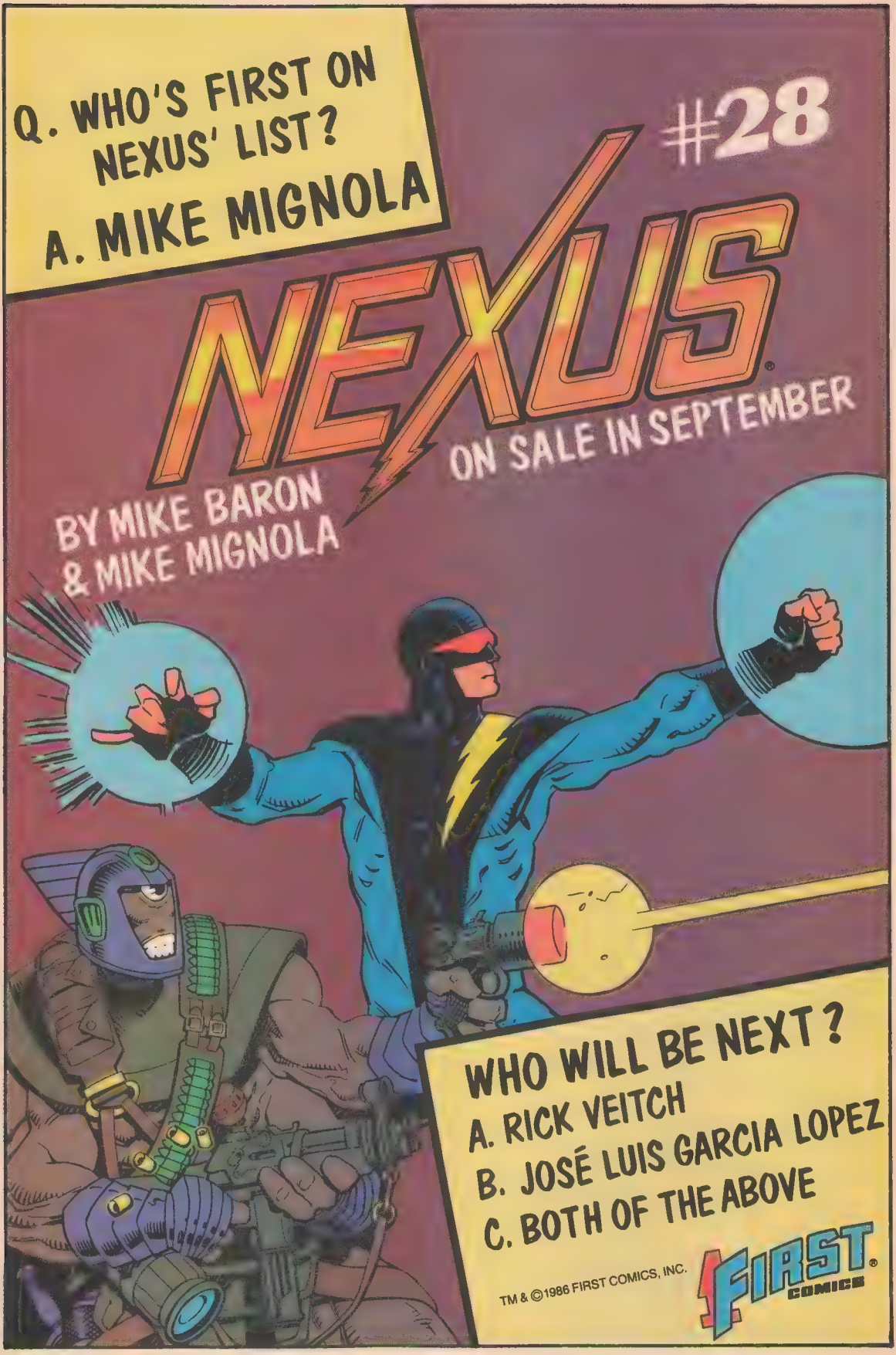

NEXT MORNING, AS THEY BREAK CAMP, SHAARILLA AVOIDS LOOKING AT ELRIC DIRECTLY, NOR DOES HE MAKE ANY MOVE TO SPEAK TO HER.
AT LAST, IN A TIMOROUS VOICE...
WHY DO YOU DESIRE THE DEAD GODS' BOOK, ELRIC?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WILL FIND IN IT?
VERY WELL, THEN, IF YOU INSIST: I DESIRE TO KNOW ONE OF TWO THINGS.
AND WHAT IS THAT?
CAN AN ULTIMATE GOD EXIST--OR NOT?
THE LORDS OF LAW AND CHAOS NOW GOVERN OUR LIVES... BUT IS THERE SOME BEING GREATER THAN THEY?
LYING AWAKE AT NIGHT, MY MIND GOES OUT, SEARCHING THROUGH BLACK BARRENNESS FOR SOMETHING--ANYTHING -- WHICH WILL TAKE ME TO IT, WARM ME, PROTECT ME, TELL ME THERE IS ORDER IN THE CHAOTIC TUMBLE OF THE UNIVERSE...
...THAT THE PRECISION OF THE PLANETS IS NOT SIMPLY A BRIEF, BRIGHT SPARK OF SANITY IN AN ETERNITY OF MALEVOLENT ANARCHY.
WITHOUT SOME CONFIRMATION, MY ONLY COMFORT IS TO ACCEPT--NAY, TO REVEL IN THE ANARCHY--TO KNOW, WITHOUT FEAR, THAT WE ARE DOOMED FROM THE START.
IF THE BOOK TELLS ME OTHERWISE, I SHALL GLADLY BELIEVE IT.
UNTIL THEN, I WILL PUT MY TRUST ONLY IN MY SWORD... AND MYSELF.
COULD IT NOT JUST BE THAT YOU FEAR THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR OWN RECENT ACTS, ELRIC?
IS IT NOT MORE COMFORTING FOR YOU TO BELIEVE IN DESERTS WHICH ARE RARELY JUST?
PERHAPS.
I DO NOT KNOW.
THAT IS THE ONLY REAL TRUTH, SHAARILLA.
I DO NOT KNOW.
I AM A MAN POSSESSED... AND WITHOUT THIS DEVIL-BLADE I CARRY...
... I WOULD NOT BE A MAN AT ALL.


CHAPTER 2
MOUNTING THEIR SWIFT STEEDS, THE PAIR OF ADVENTURERS SPUR THEM WITH ABANDONED SAVAGERY DOWN THE HILL-SIDE, TOWARD THE MARSH WHICH BORDERS THE SILENT LAND.
AND BEFORE THE HORSES CAN HALT, THEIR HOOVES HAVE SPLASHED SUDDENLY INTO--
BOG!
KEEP BACK, SHAARILLA! IF YOU GET CAUGHT--!
WELL? HOW DO WE CROSS?
THERE WAS A MAP...
WHERE IS IT?
I LOST IT! BUT I TRIED HARD TO MEMORIZE IT--AND I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO GET US SAFELY ACROSS.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME OF THIS BEFORE?
I'M SORRY, ELRIC... BUT FOR A WHOLE DAY, JUST BEFORE I FOUND YOU, MY MEMORY WAS GONE.
WHEN I CAME TO MYSELF, THE MAP WAS MISSING!
THERE IS SOME FORCE WORKING AGAINST US, I AM SURE... THOUGH I KNOW NOT WHAT IT IS.
LET US HOPE YOUR MEMORY IS NOT TOO FAULTY NOW.
THESE MARSHES ARE INFAMOUS THE WORLD OVER... BUT, BY ALL ACCOUNTS, ONLY NATURAL HAZARDS WAIT FOR US.
THERE'S A NARROW PATH, I REMEMBER, THAT LEADS OUT INTO THE MARSH...


Q. WHO'S FIRST ON NEXUS' LIST?
A. MIKE MIGNOLA
#28
NEXUS
ON SALE IN SEPTEMBER
BY MIKE BARON & MIKE MIGNOLA
WHO WILL BE NEXT?
A. RICK VEITCH
B. JOSÉ LUIS GARCIA LOPEZ
C. BOTH OF THE ABOVE
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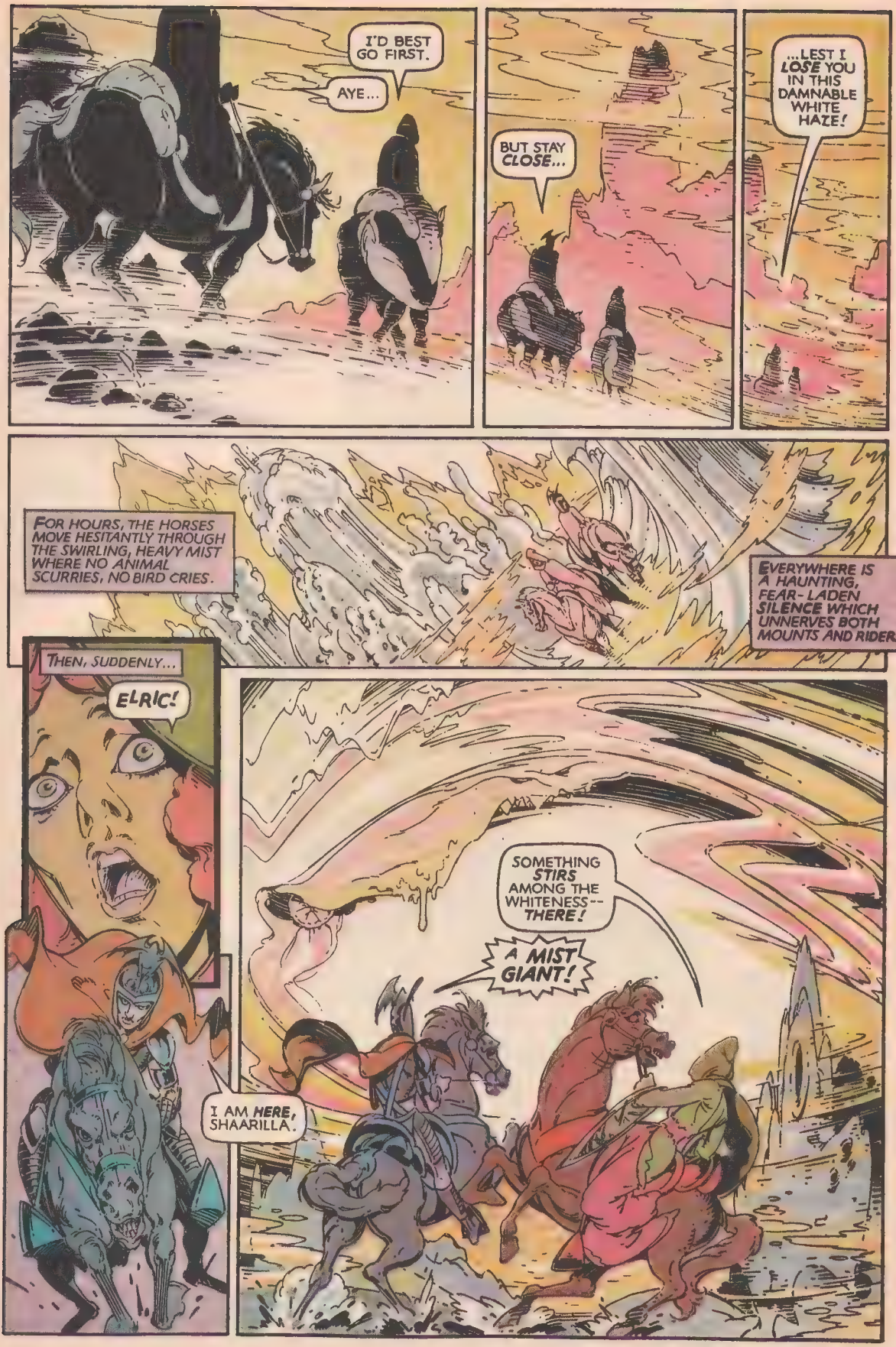
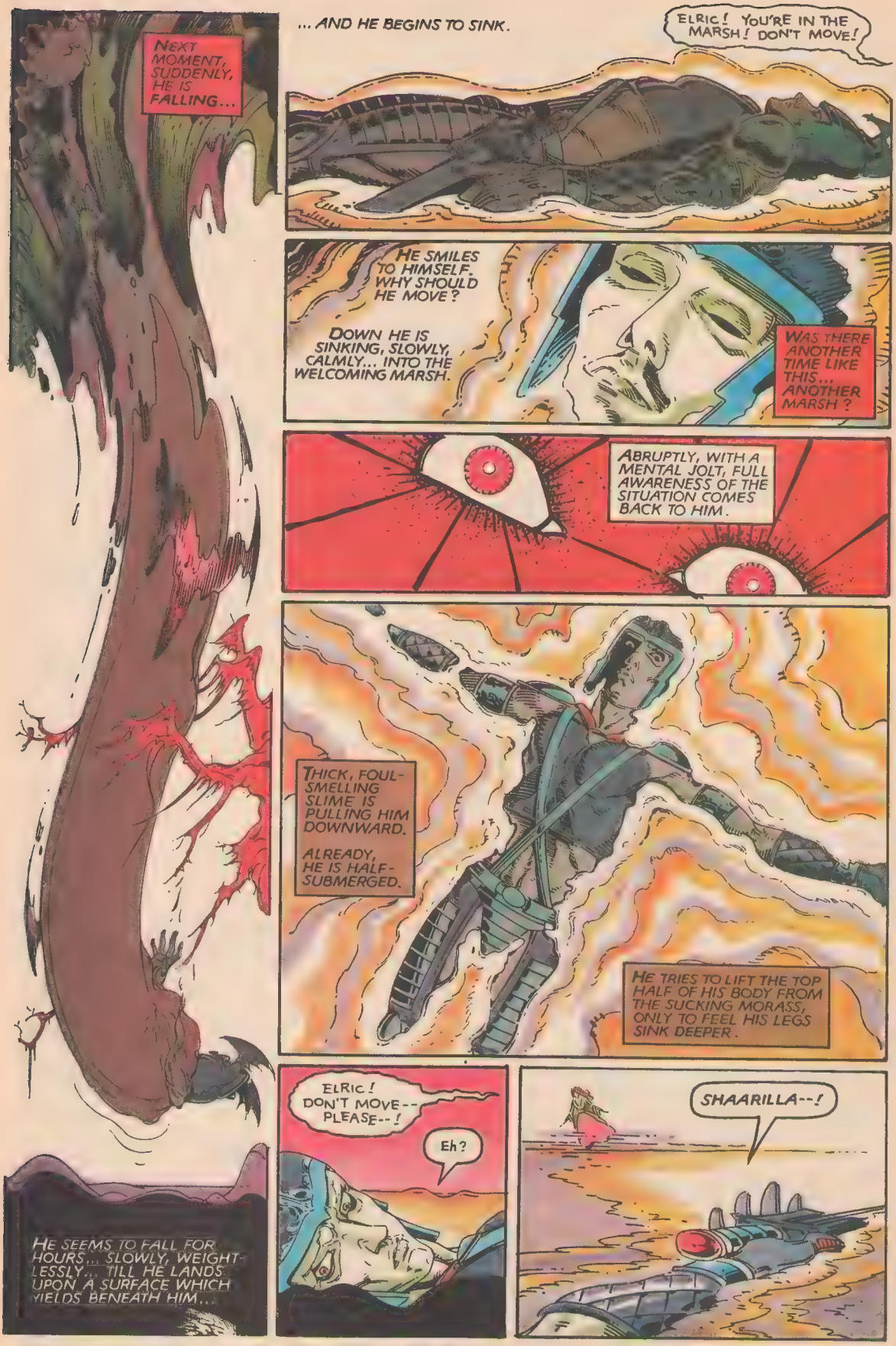
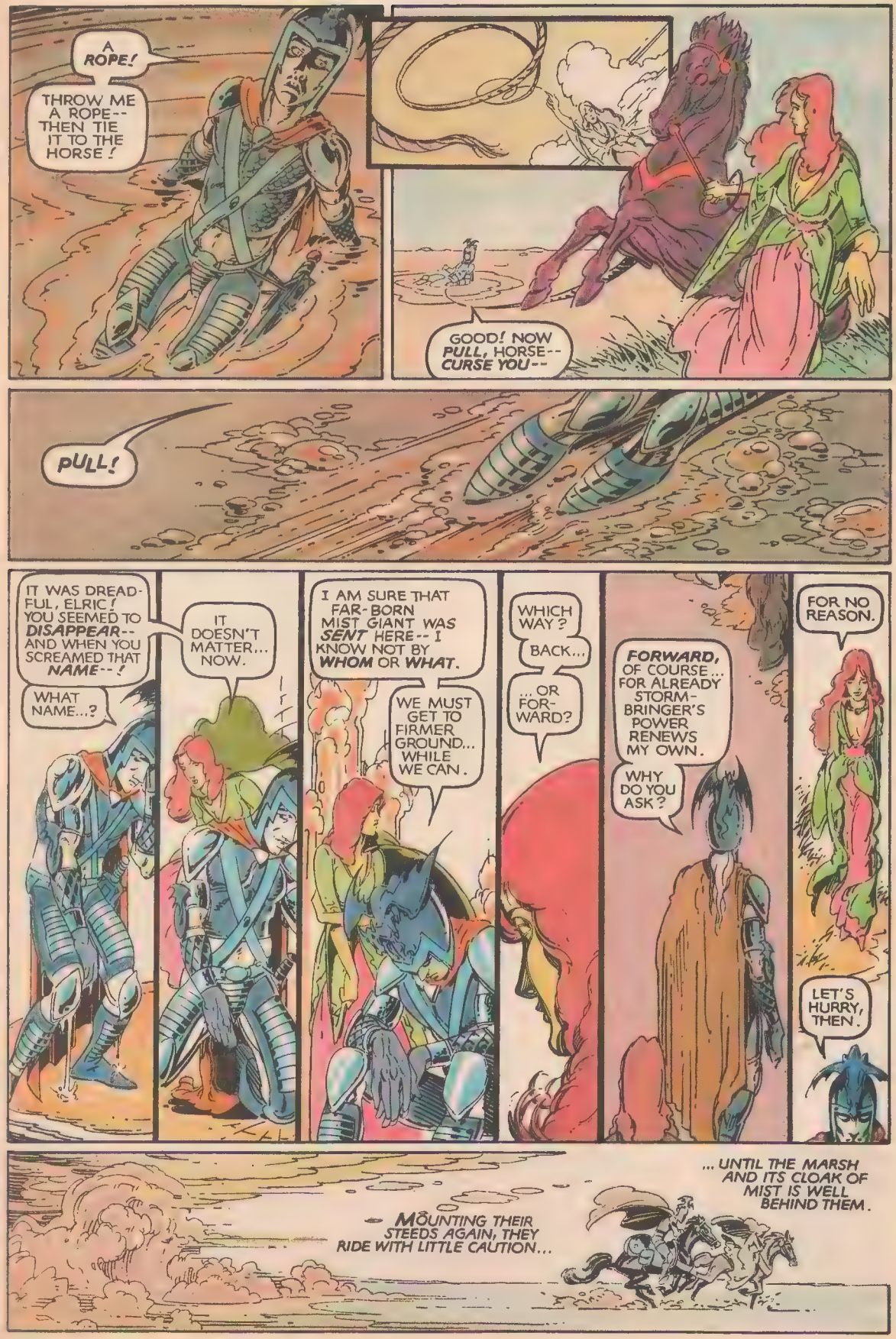

I'D BEST GO FIRST.
AYE...
BUT STAY CLOSE...
...LEST I LOSE YOU IN THIS DAMNABLE WHITE HAZE!
FOR HOURS, THE HORSES MOVE HESITANTLY THROUGH THE SWIRLING, HEAVY MIST WHERE NO ANIMAL SCURRIES, NO BIRD CRIES.
EVERYWHERE IS A HAUNTING, FEAR-LADEN SILENCE WHICH UNNERVES BOTH MOUNTS AND RIDERS.
THEN, SUDDENLY...
ELRIC!
SOMETHING STIRS AMONG THE WHITENESS--THERE!
A MIST GIANT!
I AM HERE, SHAARILLA.

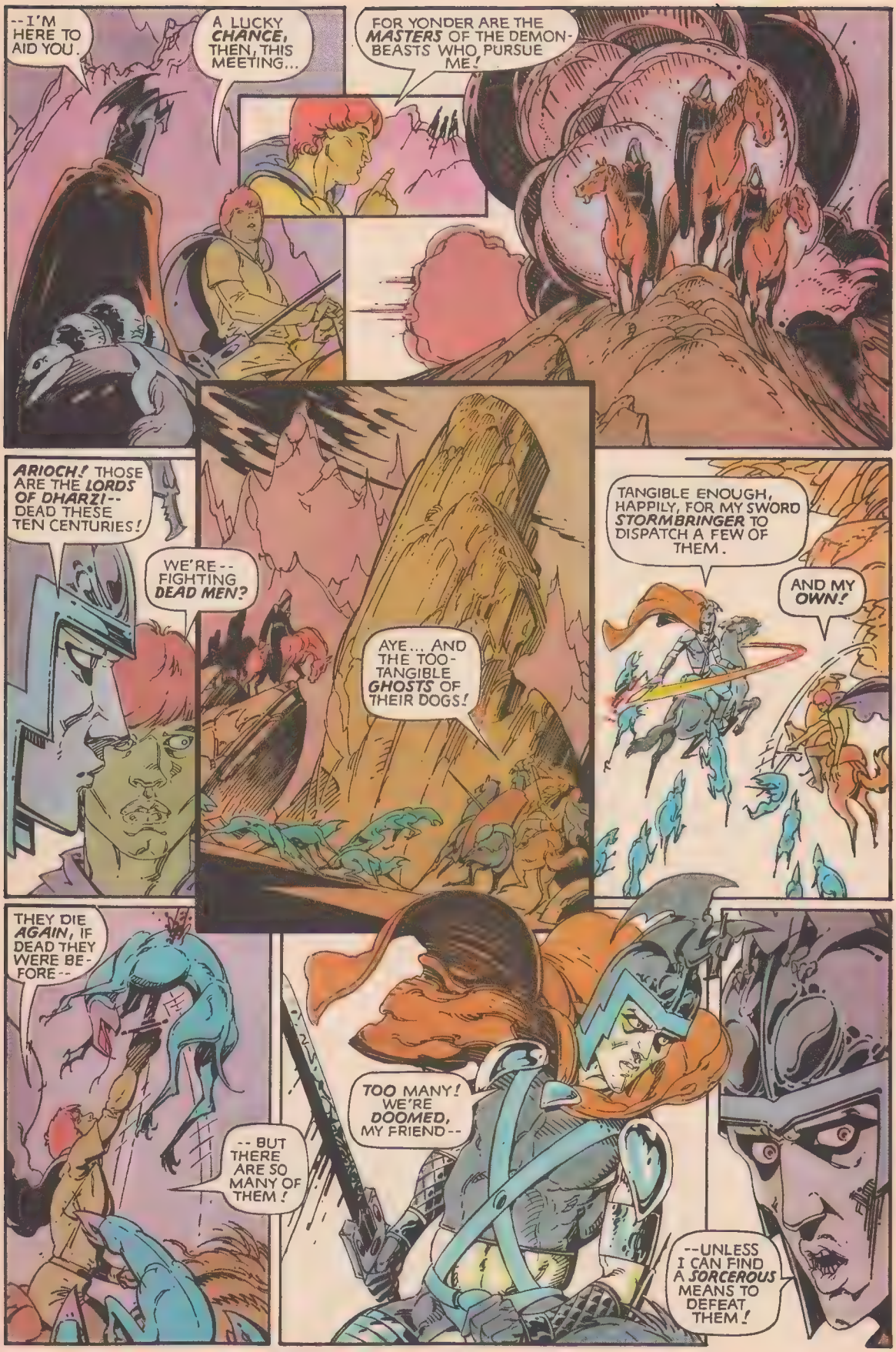
AS STORM-BRINGER SHRIEKS OUT OF ITS SCABBARD, ELRIC FEELS AN ALIEN POWER FLOW ALONG HIS ARM AND THROUGH HIS WHOLE BODY...
NOW WE KNOW WHY SO FEW ANIMALS INHABIT THIS STRETCH OF SWAMP.
SUCH GHOULS FEED OFF THE SOULS AND THE BLOOD OF MEN AND BEASTS!
PART OF ELRIC WANTS TO RUN, TO HIDE... BUT HE HAS NO CONTROL OVER THE POWER WHICH NOW PUSHES HIM TO MEET THE HALF-VISIBLE HORROR...
ARIOCH, LORD OF THE SEVEN DARKS, BE WITH ME NOW!
...AND THE NAMES HE SHOUTS HAVE NO MEANING, NOW, TO HIS CONSCIOUS MIND:
BALAAN--MARTHIM! AESMA! ALASTOR! SAEBOS! VERDELT! NIZILFKM!
HABORYM OF THE FIRES WHICH DESTROY!
IT IS LIKE TRYING TO CUT THROUGH WATER AS HIS SWORD HACKS AND SLASHES AT THE SHAPE--SENTIENT, PULSATING WATER.
BUT STORMBRINGER HAS EFFECT, AND THE WHOLE SHAPE OF THE MIST GIANT QUIVERS AS IF IN DREADFUL PAIN.
THEN--
ARIOCH!
--IT PLUCKS HIM UP!

HE IS BLINDED NOW, BY THE NEARNESS OF THE COLORLESS THING THAT HOLDS HIM DANGLING--
--AND HE CRIES THE NAMES AGAIN--
BALAAN-- MARTHIM!
--AS STORM-BRINGER SINGS AN EVIL SONG--
AESMA! SAEBOX! ALASTOR!
--AND THE GHOUL DRAWS HIM, ALMOST LASCIVIOUSLY--
--INCH BY INCH--
VERDELT! NIZILFKM!
--TOWARD ITS GAPING MAW.
THEN, A MIND TOUCHES ELRIC'S-- A MIND SARDONIC, POWERFUL, EVIL--
--AND HE KNOWS THAT ARIOCH RESPONDS AT LAST!
EVEN AS HE FEELS THE MIST GIANT WEAKEN ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY--
--ELRIC STRIKES AGAIN AND AGAIN-- STRIKES BLINDLY, AGONY PIERCING EVERY NERVE OF HIS FRAIL ALBINO BODY.

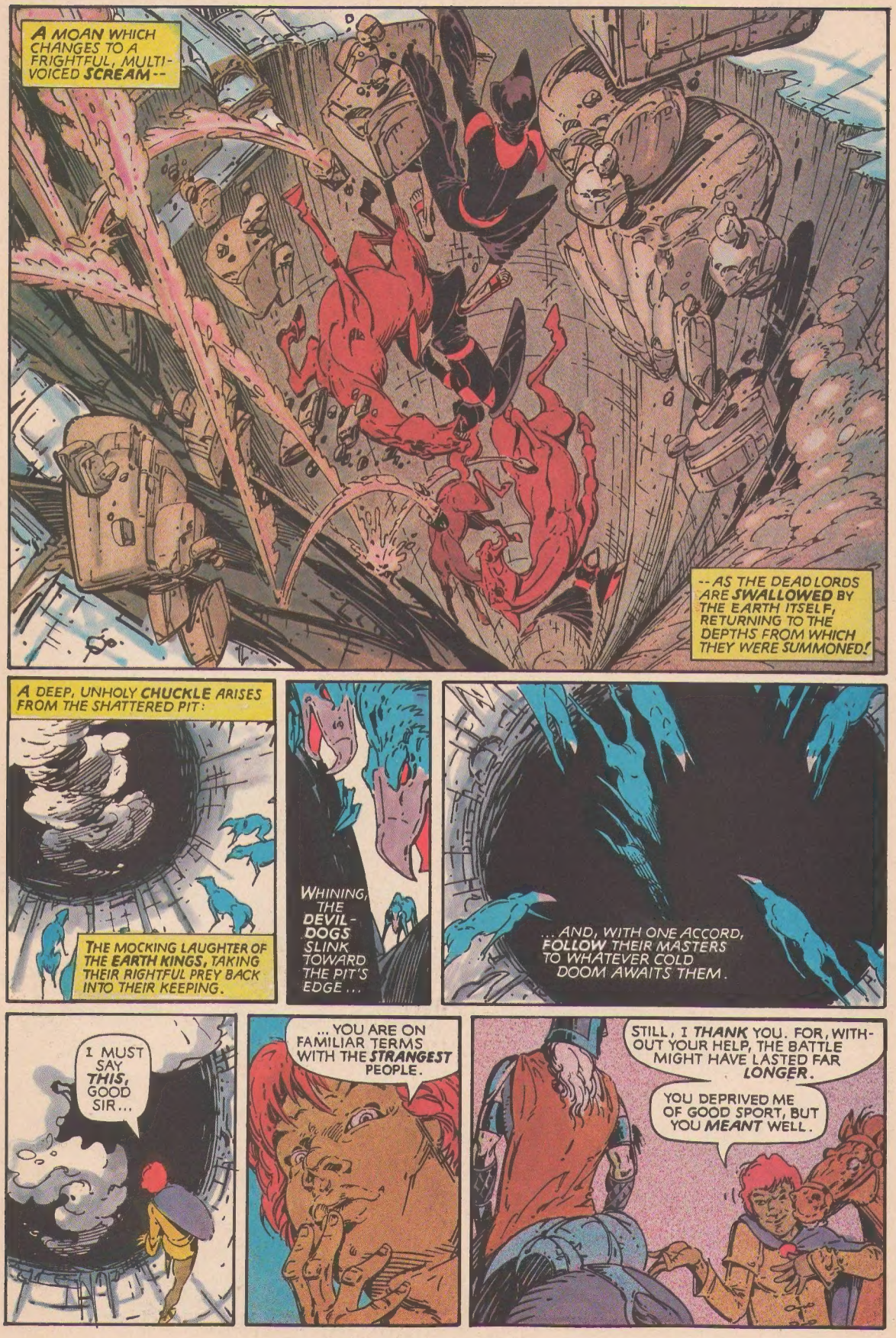

NEXT MOMENT, SUDDENLY, HE IS FALLING...
... AND HE BEGINS TO SINK.
ELRIC! YOU'RE IN THE MARSH! DON'T MOVE!
HE SMILES TO HIMSELF. WHY SHOULD HE MOVE?
DOWN HE IS SINKING, SLOWLY, CALMLY... INTO THE WELCOMING MARSH.
WAS THERE ANOTHER TIME LIKE THIS... ANOTHER MARSH?
ABRUPTLY, WITH A MENTAL JOLT, FULL AWARENESS OF THE SITUATION COMES BACK TO HIM.
THICK, FOUL-SMELLING SLIME IS PULLING HIM DOWNWARD.
ALREADY, HE IS HALF-SUBMERGED.
HE TRIES TO LIFT THE TOP HALF OF HIS BODY FROM THE SUCKING MORASS, ONLY TO FEEL HIS LEGS SINK DEEPER.
ELRIC! DON'T MOVE-- PLEASE--!
Eh?
SHAARILLA--!
HE SEEMS TO FALL FOR HOURS... SLOWLY, WEIGHTLESSLY... TILL HE LANDS UPON A SURFACE WHICH YIELDS BENEATH HIM...

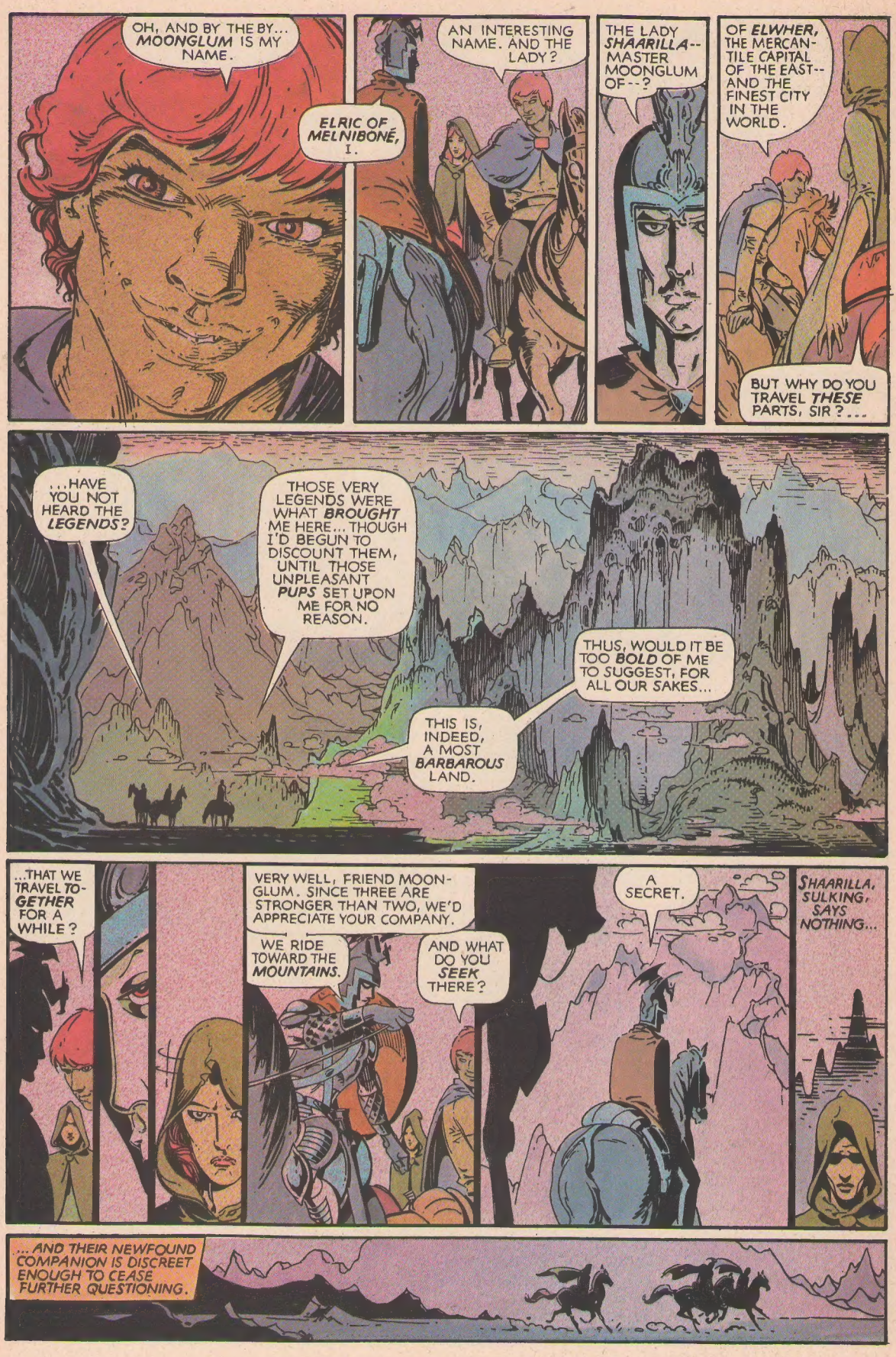

A ROPE!
THROW ME A ROPE-- THEN TIE IT TO THE HORSE!
GOOD! NOW PULL, HORSE-- CURSE YOU--
PULL!
IT WAS DREADFUL, ELRIC! YOU SEEMED TO DISAPPEAR-- AND WHEN YOU SCREAMED THAT NAME--!
WHAT NAME...?
IT DOESN'T MATTER... NOW.
I AM SURE THAT FAR-BORN MIST GIANT WAS SENT HERE-- I KNOW NOT BY WHOM OR WHAT.
WE MUST GET TO FIRMER GROUND... WHILE WE CAN.
WHICH WAY?
BACK...
...OR FORWARD?
FORWARD, OF COURSE... FOR ALREADY STORM-BRINGER'S POWER RENEWS MY OWN.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
FOR NO REASON.
LET'S HURRY, THEN.
MOUNTING THEIR STEEDS AGAIN, THEY RIDE WITH LITTLE CAUTION...
...UNTIL THE MARSH AND ITS CLOAK OF MIST IS WELL BEHIND THEM.

BY THE FIFTH DAY, THEY RIDE THROUGH BARREN, ROCKY COUNTRY WHOSE GROUND, MADE SLIPPERY BY RECENT RAINS, FORCES THEM TO RIDE MORE SLOWLY...
AROOOO
ELRIC-- WHAT'S THAT BAYING?
SOMETHING COMES TOWARD US... POSSIBLY MORE ENEMIES.
SHELTER THERE, SHAARILLA.
WITH LUCK, THEY'LL PASS US BY.
AROOOOOO
THE BIRD-HEADED HUNTING DOGS OF THE DHARZI!
I THOUGHT THEY, LIKE THEIR MASTERS, WERE LONG EXTINCT!
I ALSO! THERE WAS NEVER CONTACT BETWEEN THE DHARZI AND THE DWELLERS OF THIS LAND.
THOSE DEVIL-DOGS WILL SCENT US SURE!
HO, FRIEND! TURN AND STAND--
THEN WE CAN LOSE NOTHING BY AIDING THEIR QUARRY.


--I'M HERE TO AID YOU.
A LUCKY CHANCE, THEN, THIS MEETING...
FOR YONDER ARE THE MASTERS OF THE DEMON-BEASTS WHO PURSUE ME!
ARIOCH! THOSE ARE THE LORDS OF DHARZI-- DEAD THESE TEN CENTURIES!
WE'RE-- FIGHTING DEAD MEN?
AYE... AND THE TOO-TANGIBLE GHOSTS OF THEIR DOGS!
TANGIBLE ENOUGH, HAPPILY, FOR MY SWORD STORMBRINGER TO DISPATCH A FEW OF THEM.
AND MY OWN!
THEY DIE AGAIN, IF DEAD THEY WERE BE-FORE--
-- BUT THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM!
TOO MANY! WE'RE DOOMED, MY FRIEND--
--UNLESS I CAN FIND A SORCEROUS MEANS TO DEFEAT THEM!

THE SPELL FOR WHICH HE RACKS HIS BRAIN COMES TO HIM AND-- HOPING THE FORCES HE MUST INVOKE WILL DECIDE TO AID HIM-- ELRIC BEGINS HIS CHANT:
"Let the Laws which govern all things Not so lightly be dismissed... Let the Ones who flaunt the Earth-Kings With a fresher death be kissed!"
NOTHING!
THE SPELL WASN'T POWERFUL ENOUGH.
I'VE FAILED.
WELL, IT SEEMS WE GO BACK TO FIGHTING FOR OUR--EH?
THE VERY EARTH BEGINS TO TREMBLE!
GET BACK, MY FRIEND--
--OR WE'LL PERISH WITH THEM!
NEARBY, HELL-HOUNDS START WITH FRIGHT--
--AND A LOW, INARTICULATE MOAN COMES FROM THE LIPS OF THE LIVING DEAD.


A MOAN WHICH CHANGES TO A FRIGHTFUL, MULTI-VOICED SCREAM--
--AS THE DEAD LORDS ARE SWALLOWED BY THE EARTH ITSELF, RETURNING TO THE DEPTHS FROM WHICH THEY WERE SUMMONED!
A DEEP, UNHOLY CHUCKLE ARISES FROM THE SHATTERED PIT:
THE MOCKING LAUGHTER OF THE EARTH KINGS, TAKING THEIR RIGHTFUL PREY BACK INTO THEIR KEEPING.
WHINING, THE DEVIL-DOGS SLINK TOWARD THE PIT'S EDGE...
...AND, WITH ONE ACCORD, FOLLOW THEIR MASTERS TO WHATEVER COLD DOOM AWAITS THEM.
I MUST SAY THIS, GOOD SIR...
...YOU ARE ON FAMILIAR TERMS WITH THE STRANGEST PEOPLE.
STILL, I THANK YOU. FOR, WITHOUT YOUR HELP, THE BATTLE MIGHT HAVE LASTED FAR LONGER.
YOU DEPRIVED ME OF GOOD SPORT, BUT YOU MEANT WELL.


OH, AND BY THE BY... MOONGLUM IS MY NAME.
ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ, I.
AN INTERESTING NAME. AND THE LADY?
THE LADY SHAARILLA-- MASTER MOONGLUM OF--?
OF ELWHER, THE MERCANTILE CAPITAL OF THE EAST-- AND THE FINEST CITY IN THE WORLD.
BUT WHY DO YOU TRAVEL THESE PARTS, SIR?...
...HAVE YOU NOT HEARD THE LEGENDS?
THOSE VERY LEGENDS WERE WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE... THOUGH I'D BEGUN TO DISCOUNT THEM, UNTIL THOSE UNPLEASANT PUPS SET UPON ME FOR NO REASON.
THUS, WOULD IT BE TOO BOLD OF ME TO SUGGEST, FOR ALL OUR SAKES...
THIS IS, INDEED, A MOST BARBAROUS LAND.
...THAT WE TRAVEL TOGETHER FOR A WHILE?
VERY WELL, FRIEND MOONGLUM. SINCE THREE ARE STRONGER THAN TWO, WE'D APPRECIATE YOUR COMPANY.
WE RIDE TOWARD THE MOUNTAINS.
AND WHAT DO YOU SEEK THERE?
A SECRET.
SHAARILLA, SULKING, SAYS NOTHING...
...AND THEIR NEWFOUND COMPANION IS DISCREET ENOUGH TO CEASE FURTHER QUESTIONING.

THE BOT SO BIG HE NEEDED TWO BOOKS!

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